DEV-0 Project Idea Write-Up

Group Members: Shelby Wilson, Dominick Dellecave, and Matthew Garvey

App Name DRAFT: Indulge™

Project Team and Organization:

As far as roles and responsibilities, Dominick will be the design master and the head coder on the front-end head coder, primarily responsible for designing and implementing the front-end. Shelby will be responsible for design integration which will be the union of the front-end design and back-end functionality. Matthew will be the head coder on the back-end to design functionality for the application. All three group members will be responsible for software testing and documentation.

Description of Application:

We will be creating an application with similar functionality to Tinder, but instead of searching for people, our users will search for food recommendations. The target audience for this application is going to be a younger demographic (about 18-35). People living in more urbanized areas will also be prioritized because of the amount of food options around them. These users are our target because they have the drive to try new things, a baseline of technical knowledge and skills necessary to use our app, and a plethora of food options available to them. The excluded users will be people who live in more rural areas or do not possess a mobile phone. People in rural areas will be excluded because of the lack of food options in their own vicinity, and as such our app would not lead them to actually finding any new places to eat. People who do not possess mobile smart phones would be excluded because it is obvious that they would not see a need for any sort of app, let alone one to find places to eat.

This application will be for mobile devices. This allows for people to explore and review food options on-the-go, for example, if they were traveling to a new place. Mobile applications are great for quick interactions with users, using some of their free seconds here and there. Our application will take advantage of these precious seconds and deliver quick, real value to our users. One limitation of this modality is that mobile applications often are more easily accessible for a user because they can use them at all times of the day and anywhere they are. A user's constant attachment to their mobile device would facilitate short and quick interactions with our app for them to be on their way to a new food spot. Whereas, if we were web-based it would require a user to go out of their way to pursue our service, rather than simply tapping the icon on their iPhone, completing a few swipes, and being on their way. Ultimately, this allows our app to be integrated into our users' rapid lifestyles.

We will have 4 main tasks:

1. Swiping through food places to find new locations.
2. Reviewing food places you visit and saving them for you to look back on.
3. Maintaining a list of places you have been.
4. Maintaining a list of places you want to visit.

These tasks are all important and work together towards the goal of facilitating new food experiences for our users. These tasks were all derived from us logically working through the process one would take through our application to discover new food spots. A more person-to-person, social media type of interaction would be great in this application and is possibly where we would take the app in the future, but for now, with our limited time and resources, it is out of scope. These interactions would be something along the lines of adding friends, and populating a feed of said friends' newly visited locations and their respective

reviews. In the scope of our app, anyone looking to share their food experience with their friends, within our app would be excluded in this case.

The target user will be supported by the above tasks because they are each a necessary step in the process of finding a new restaurant. The key use cases supported by these tasks are:

1. Finding a new food location, using simple swiping motions. Swiping allows users to multi-task more efficiently because they do not need to focus their fingers on a certain point of the screen to make a decision. They can freely swipe left or right anywhere on the screen once they have made their quick decision. Swiping also mimics natural hand movements, whereas button pressing requires you to learn the location of the buttons and focus harder. The reason we will use swiping in our app is similar to the reason that Apple does not have a Home button on their phones: ease of use and to save screen space.
2. Saving a food location to go to at a later date. This would allow someone with a busy lifestyle to use our app in small bursts to create their list of "To-Visit" places, so that when their schedule permits they only need to access our app to reference the places they've already swiped through.
3. Reviewing food locations to remember how it was and to provide that info to other users.

A use case not supported is the social media-esque interaction with other users, although, again, this is definitely a great next step for the application.

Comprehensive Comparison to Existing Applications:

Beli:

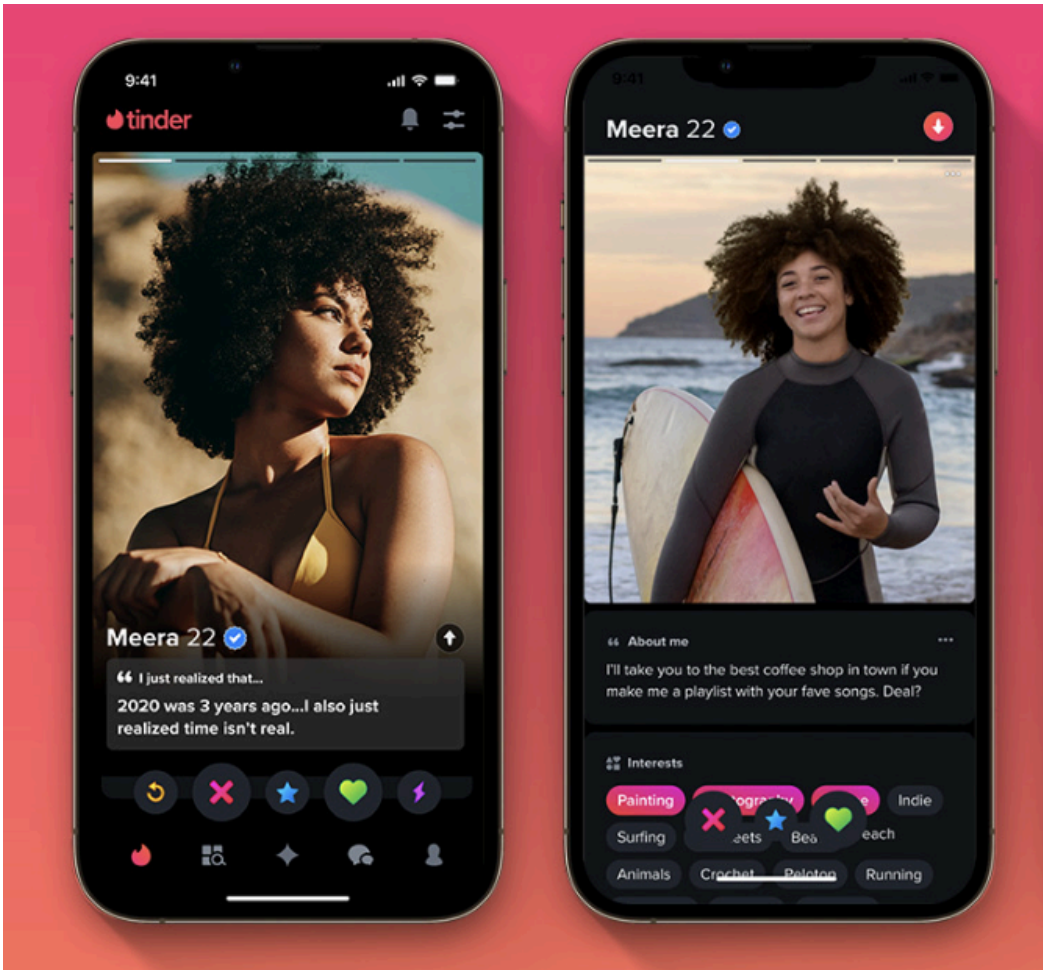
The Beli app provides the user with the opportunity to see where other people, who they choose to interact with, are eating. The app allows users to create lists of places they would like to go or have been to and then show off those to their friends. The user and app interaction comes when a user goes to a new location they found in their feed, typically because their friend had visited somewhere and the review was published. When a user visits somewhere new they can mark the place as visited and review where they ate. The interesting gimmick with Beli is that upon publishing a review the app will show users other places they have been, and present the choice of which place is better. If the user says that the newest place is better the app continues to provide new places they have already visited until there are no other visited places or the user decides that the new place is not better than a previously visited place. This allows the app to create their actual ranking of places the user has visited. These rankings become public to the user's friends to see where they rank highly, to structure lists for places to visit.

The provided screenshots of Beli show the user pages for where they have visited or plan on visiting. The lists screen is where the rankings and categories are located. For users this is an easy way to navigate to what suits them for their use case. The second screenshot is what is actually populated within a list, and as seen, it shows ratings, reviews, and images in a very streamlined way. The last screenshot shows the curated cuisine tab that the app generates as a user reviews various places.

The Beli app very well supports user to user interaction. The inclusion of a feed for friends makes it very easy for users to see places they might not have visited previously. The app gets very in-your-face with adding friends, to ensure that users understand the interaction aspect of its service. The other feature that is very well supported is the organization of visits and to-visits. The app creates various lists for the user automatically, and the way everything is

logged within the app is very user-friendly and easy to navigate. With that being said, a major shortcoming of the app is the actual review process. When a user chooses to review a new location, they are presented with a series of boxes they *can* populate, with little explanation of what is significant for each of them. This contrasts with the app guiding and pushing users into user to user interactions, because it really does not do a good job of guiding a user into user to app interactions. One other large shortcoming of Beli is that it does not support the user with any sort of shortcut for the ranking process. When it comes time to decide how each new place stacks up with previous locations, a user has to move through the decision process of "Which of these two places is better?". This would be better if a user were able to view their list and simply place it where they feel it belongs to avoid the tedium of constant decisions if somewhere is going to be highly ranked. Ultimately, this app is still very much going to inspire our app that we will create. The two features we want to pull are the way the visited and to-visit locations are maintained for a user, and the decision process of ranking places. However, rather than ripping that decision process for ranking places that will be driving inspiration for the process of deciding on places to visit.

Tinder:



Tinder is a dating application that helps users make either romantic or platonic connections with people. After creating an account and filling out their profile (likes, dislikes, and other get-to-know-you information), users are presented with other peoples' profiles one-by-one and must decide whether they want to swipe left (dislike) or right (like). When a user swipes left on a person, they never see them again (unless they were to create a new account). Swiping right is a little different: if two users swipe right on each others' profiles, a "match" is formed and they can start direct-messaging each other.

We chose Tinder because it is the most popular dating application with the swiping functionality we want to replicate. It has a clean and simple design that gives us a good reference when

designing our app. All members of the group are also familiar with how Tinder works and have used it in the past, which will help with design and testing.

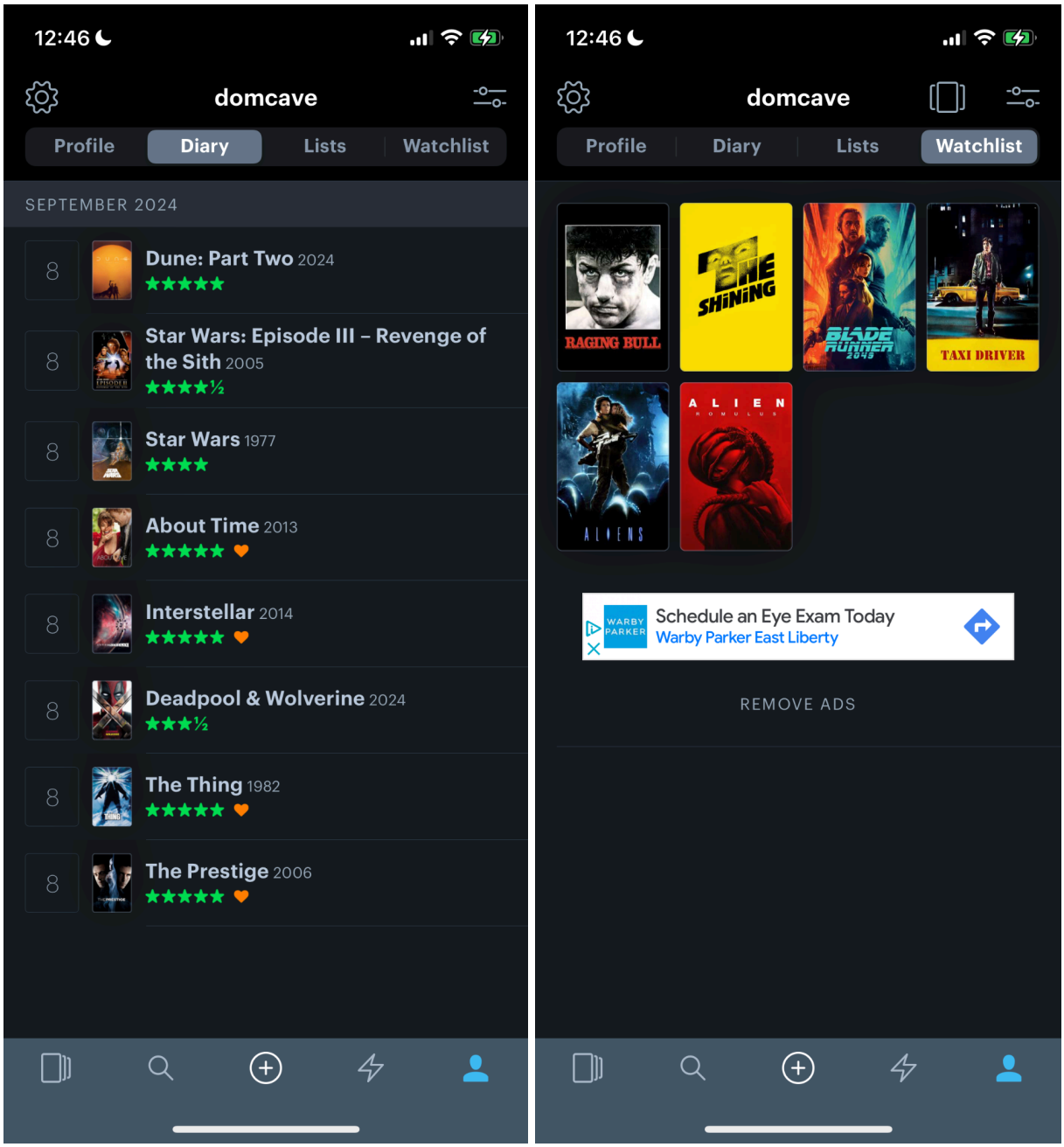
We like the concept of swiping left and right on Tinder and the ability to create a simple but detailed profile with some information about yourself. We like how this allows users to rapidly swipe on people they immediately know they will not have a connection with, while also allowing users to find out cool things about someone they like before even meeting them. One of the hardest things when finding new friends or a potential significant other is the first conversation, so Tinder does a great job at giving starter topics to get to know each other. They also allow you to narrow your suggested people by mile radius and age, which are two very important things when deciding if you want to date/be friends with someone. I like that they allow you to narrow your suggested people with these kinds of simple constraints rather than more complex constraints of hobbies/career/personality.

We assume that the creators of Tinder considered adding more complexity to their application like having more complex profiles and trying to pair people with similar interests together. However, we think they went for the more simple, random approach because it helps people branch out and embrace their differences. They might have also considered a ranged liking system (rating someone 1-10) rather than swiping left/right, but this also makes things more complicated and could potentially promote bullying/drama within the app.

The main functionality we want to borrow from Tinder is the swiping left/right and being presented with a random person (restaurant in our case) one-by-one. We believe that most people searching for new restaurants are very undecided and would benefit from being presented restaurants in the same way as Tinder. Rather than typing “food near me” or “best restaurants in

Pittsburgh” in a search engine and scrolling through the same chain restaurants for the 100th time, users can rapidly swipe through unique suggestions and find something new.

Letterboxd:



Letterboxd is a social movie review application. They have both a web and mobile version, but for our purposes we are focused on mobile. This application was created so that users could find new movies to watch and then review those movies and share their opinions with others on the app. This is almost identical to the service we aim to offer, with food/restaurants taking the place of films. The main two pieces of functionality that we want to draw inspiration from in regard to this application are the abilities to view a list of movies you have already watched and a "watchlist" of movies you want to view. We believe these two aspects were designed correctly because they are very simple visually, and only present the necessary information. For example, even though both screens are functionally just lists, the list of your reviews presents much more information with the ability to click on each option to dive deeper into your review. On the other hand, the watchlist only shows the posters of the movies you have on the list, which also allows space for more movies to be on this screen versus the reviewed list. This makes sense since, hopefully, the users would find many movies through the application that they would want to watch. One other design aspect we like is the toolbar at the bottom of the screen. It provides shortcuts to all of the main features of the application with a clear, bolder icon in the middle for the true main feature of adding another movie review. All three of these design aspects of Letterboxd are things we hope to be able to successfully draw inspiration from. We want two lists for previously visited restaurants and ones users wish to visit, as well as a clear toolbar with the main call to action being for the dating app style swiping to find new restaurants. Lastly, we do think that other designs were considered for the application, but most of the differences between them and the final product would've been cosmetic only. The main flow and feature design of Letterboxd are common among many different applications, so we would not have expected them to try and break too much from that formula in the design process. This is

because, when using these similar applications, users build up learned behaviors and expectations of how that style of application should work. By trying to break the mold too much, Letterboxd would've only confused new users and made the barrier to entry higher.