

Death Valley

What is the problem in brief?

Current travel planning takes time and energy to filter through a flood of options. Searching Google for 'day trip in San Francisco' will return many articles each with lists of twenty different, popular activities. However, it is up to the user to designate the order of the activities, times for each one, locations, and look up reviews of these places with more searching of information. These lists may be out of date, without current closing times or construction issues, making these activities not do-able. Users currently have to filter through numerous lists of activities and plan a day themselves, instead of going to a single site with an intuitive interface. Moreover, navigating these sites on mobile is difficult, and spontaneous travellers will not have a desktop environment to plan a trip in circumstances like long layovers.

How will your project change the status quo? For whom?

Our project will change the way a travelling business person spends their time between flights and work. This site creates an itinerary of things to do and places to visit during their trip. By providing the top options based off of their personal tastes and time constraints, this system will make the process of finding things to do quick and pain-free. Most results when looking for things to do in a city are clickbait lists of the "Top 20 Things to do in _____", which both can be overwhelming and don't allow for an interaction between the user and the interface. By creating a system that gives few enough options as to not overwhelm the user, while still being interactive enough that they can personalize the results to fit their interests we hope to make exploring a new city easier than ever before. It will also be designed mobile-first, allowing for users that are on-the-go to quickly create and adjust plans.

What is (at least) one naïve design idea (rough sketch)? How does this idea address what you see as the core problem?

Our design will be focused on making the mobile interactions intuitive, since most travelers will be referencing their phones as they travel. In that space, an idea we want to implement would be automatic generation of an itinerary based on your available time and desired location to explore. We will pull up-to-date information about the availability of places to visit from Yelp and traffic in the area from Google to give users who don't want to have to search up the details of their adventure themselves. Branching from this, users can then modify our automatically generated itinerary by swiping out disliked suggestions, rearranging the order of visits, or inserting other things they'd like to do. We will re-generate travel times, always using the most up to date info available for us to pull from other services.

This idea solves the issue lazy travelers who don't want to have to plan out every aspect of the trip, while also allowing users control over their itinerary if they like. By pulling information from other services, we solve the problem of not up to date information about places on websites and unexpected traffic jams. We're leveraging the information now available to us in a data-driven world to make seeing new things easy.

What information do you need to collect? How will you collect it? How will you meet your target users, or who can serve as effective proxies for them?

We will collect information from top sites at travel destinations for activities, and give the user a variety of options per location based on their interests. We will provide reviews for recommended locations/restaurants from various location rating applications. We will need to know what the individual users' interests are and how much time they have for their trip. Using location data, routing data, traffic information, bus/T schedules gathered from various APIs, we can design an efficient route to the locations of interest and back while keeping to the users' schedule. We could use Reddit travel, study away students, people who live far away and fly a lot.

How will your team work together to accomplish these goals (as well as your individual learning goals)?

We will engage users who are active in the travel community to achieve the best possible feedback to our design vs. the current solutions in the world. To make sure the feedback is up to date and accurate with our design, we must strive to complete our goals on time. Our goals for this project are diverse, so we will assign roles to design and code. We will keep team motivation high, through teaming events, high-fives, and food. Communication will be kept a priority to prevent mis-information, unnecessary arguments, or bad team dynamics from developing. Possible trips into Boston, or New York can be arranged to test real-world interactions with our app.

