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CS325 Usability

Project 4.3 - Project Proposal

Abstract: Summary of idea and high-level overview of approach to be taken.

Need and Main Idea:

Meet and Eat(M&E) will be an app that allows users to organize meet-ups with friends to get a bite to eat. This application addresses the fundamental need of social interaction during meals. Our primary user group are students attending university. Average age of the user group is 18-21. If the application were to be successful with students, the user group may be extended to include similar user groups such as employees in a workplace. This will be a mobile application, possibly implemented on the Android platform. The application allows user to plan meetups using scales such as time, date and location preferences. There will be a map feature giving users an interface for finding eateries. This would be similar to the Google Maps extension implemented by Yelp! Users can create meetup events associated with certain locations. Eateries may include maps or layouts of dining areas to help users further specify meetup events. Meetup invitations can be sent to other users or groups. A friends list and custom groups can be maintained by a user. Users invited to an event can input their desired meet time and the software will find the optimal meet time for all users. This component is similar to the algorithm used by Doodle for finding a common meeting time. M&E will update all invited users of the chosen event time. It is ultimately up to all users invited to arrive promptly to the meetup and enjoy each others company!

Existing Approaches:

There does not already exist a system that solves the proposed problem in full, fully synthesizing time, date and location preferences. While scheduling mechanics such as Doodle offer group scheduling for a time and date, that system only allows for one singular location, and does not consider the variability among user's access to a given place. Thus, this proposal is different than other systems in its consideration of location, as well as its specific aim at meals, which will thus enable for a more customized, meal-centered interface, possibly including listings and maps of dining locations to assist the user. Further, this proposed system addresses the shortcoming of scheduling systems that do not provide location-based functionality, like giving options of locations that are open during the determined meal time.

This Approach:

Our system will generate a prioritized list of recommended meal itineraries given the user specified temporal and locational parameters. To set the time and location parameters, the application will facilitate communication between other users within the invite group via location and time voting, along with text communication.

There will be two mutually exclusive roles that the user can partake in: host and invitee. Each itinerary planning session will begin with a user who elects to be a host, i.e. starts the program and touches the "Start New Event" button. The host will then be able to choose the time they are available, who to invite and their preferences as to where they would like to eat. The application will then notify the invitees of the host's event and then the invitees will be able to choose their time and eatery preferences. Given this input, the program will generate the list of suggested meal itineraries. The process of the input generation is less mundane than regular form filling, as Meet and Eat is a largely collaborative tool and may require a lot of app-based interaction between users. The most tricky part to implement will be the voting systems, we will most likely have to test a few different algorithms in order to find a good match for this purpose.

Representative Tasks:
Novice User - The user will scroll around the map and tap on one of the eateries (either the university dining halls or the local restaurants), which will bring up a pop-up with a prompt for the user's input, for the time they are available at, and the person they would like to dine with. The user will then choose a time and a person using a drop-down menu, which will redirect them to a screen which shows them a list of optimal time and place to meet with the person they chose. The user will select one or multiple(if their friend's preference for location or time differs), and a meeting invite will be sent to their friend's phone with the different options. Once the friend selects one of the times and places suggested by the user, the user will get a confirmation.

Intermediate User - The intermediate user will do everything the novice user will do. In addition, they can also make groups of friends, and when the drop-down prompts appears after clicking on a location on the map, they will able to select a person to meet with or a *group*. The app will pick an optimal time and place to meet with all the group members, and once the user selects one of the options, an invite will be sent to all members of the group.

Expert User - The expert user will be able to do everything the novice and the intermediate user can do. In addition, the expert user can also select on an advanced options button on the prompt pop-up that will come up once the user clicks on a location on the map, from which they can then choose to make the meetings recurrent. The invitations will be sent out to the person/group the user selected to dine with.

What Yael Did: Abstract, Existing Approaches
What Eric Did: Need and Main Idea
What Hridya Did: Representative Tasks
What Chelsea Did: This Approach