Created by Suzann Gille & Austin Davis

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SoLocal is an app for mobile devices that will change the way people interact with community events. Created by Maryville University students, Suzann Gille and Austin Davis, SoLocal serves as your personalized event guide. Suzann and Austin saw a need for streamlined access to the events in their community. In a city like St. Louis, there is always something going on, but events are often widely spread throughout the city and county. It is hard to find one complete list of local events, and often we never hear of cool events until after we have already missed them. SoLocal is the complete solution to these problems by providing a full guide to all local events and notifying users of events near them while they are on the go.

What is SoLocal?

SoLocal wants to change the world's way of being notified about events. Through our platform, mobile apps, and services, we want to make sure people have the chance to know what is going on around them. Through our interests menu, users will have the chance to pick their event topics. In addition, users will have the choice of choosing the proximity of events depending on willingness to drive to certain locations. When a user is in or near a community, notifications will be sent to their mobile device consisting of event details with sharing options. Furthermore, users and event planners are welcome to register events through our platform. SoLocal wants to make it easier for users to be aware of their surroundings. In some areas, numerous of events are advertised through social media, flyers, or word of mouth. We have noticed that most residents of communities do not know what is going on within their neighborhood. Instead of finding out about events through the "standard" ways of communication, SoLocal wants everyone to have the opportunity to be in the know.

How does it work?

There are two main aspects to using SoLocal. The interests menu is where users select from a variety of topics including music, food and drink, art, sports, health and wellness, science and technology, free events, community and more. The interests menu is meant to be extremely simple and users only have to click on and off a topic to add or remove it from events they get notified about (*Figure 1*). Users can select as few as one or as many as all of the categories at any time. The second main menu is the location menu (*Figure 2*). This is where users turn on their mobile device's location services, set their preferred mileage radius, and select to allow SoLocal to send alerts. With these settings, SoLocal can send users push notifications of events within the distance the user is willing to travel and also provides information about events that are happening in the areas where the user travels. The mileage radius creates "your circle" and moves around the user's current location so at any given time they can see what is happening within that distance from them, no matter where they are. For those who do not wish to keep their location turned on, or who would like to see events in a particular place before they get there, SoLocal also provides an option to set a location based on city and state. Once you have found an event that you are super excited to go to, you can share the event information with your friends via text or social media straight from the SoLocal app to let them know you will be attending. Users are also able to post events that are being hosted by their business or organization (*Figures 3 & 4*). They just enter their contact information and the details of the event and submit the request to SoLocal for review. Once it has been verified as a legitimate public event, the event will appear on SoLocal.

Who are the competitors?

Our biggest competitor is an app called Eventbrite. Eventbrite is a service that allows their users to buy tickets, register events, and share events. Their website states that, "Eventbrite provides a simple and quick means for registered users or event organizers, planners, and charitable organizations to create event registration, speaker profile, organizer profile, fundraising, and other webpages related to their events". In March 2014, Eventbrite raised close to two hundred million dollars from investors and is valued at about one billion dollars. Eventbrite focuses on catering to the event organizer much more than the attendee.

How is SoLocal different?

SoLocal attracts users because of it's simplicity. The Eventbrite app asks users their interests the first time they download the app, but if you would like to change them, you can only view one category at a time. SoLocal makes it easy to turn topics off and on. The best feature that sets SoLocal apart is the push notifications (*Figure 5*). By setting the mileage radius and creating their circle, users are in control of filtering their events based on how far they are willing to go to get to them. Your circle moves around you as you travel. If you have your location turned on and your mileage radius set, you will receive push notifications about events within that distance from you, no matter where you are. This is beneficial to users who like in big cities, users who are in unfamiliar areas, or users who want to go to an event, but did not plan their trip ahead of time.

Concerns

With every new development comes potential problems. With SoLocal, users may have concerns about privacy and keeping their location turned on for optimal use. SoLocal does provide the option to turn off the user's location and set their circle based on city and state. SoLocal will also have to put a system in place to filter requests to post events on the app. SoLocal wants to keep the events public and professional so to prevent events that are not hosted by a professional business or organization from being posted, all requests will be verified by SoLocal before appearing on the app. The last concern people may have would be the use of the push notifications while people may be driving. SoLocal also gives users the option to turn alerts off and on at any time.

How will it launch?

In order to get the word out to the general public about events, we have to market to local event planners. The key to success of SoLocal is to make sure we have the event planners' trust and belief that we can publicize their events on a larger scale. We need to reach out to companies, organizations and media partners to allow us to promote SoLocal at their events. Once we get the okay from local event planners, social media would be the final platform to launch SoLocal. Our social media team can use platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and LinkedIn to advertise our brand to potential users. Marketing the app at local events will spark the interest of those who are most likely to use the app right away because they already have an interest in attending events in their community. Also marketing on college campuses will help boost the word about SoLocal with students from all over the country who are probably

always looking for something fun to go do. We will be actively looking for sponsorship for the app, ideally from big St. Louis companies that host many events.

Budget & Revenue

Based on the app development calculator on Otreva.com, the estimated cost of SoLocal would be $63,788. The costs for development were broken down as follows: E-mail login $2,835, Dashboard $11,340, GeoLocation $2,835, Compass $2,835, Maps $5,670, Search $8,505, Social Sharing $2,835, User Privacy Settings $4,253, Push Notifications $5,670, Event Listings $8,505, and Ad Serve $8,505. In order to generate revenue, we would charge advertisers for banner advertisements from related businesses on our event description and listing pages. We would also do Cost-Per-Install advertisements from other sources of media. Finally, we will reach out to organizations and businesses for willing sponsors who believe in our app and know that SoLocal will increase traffic to their events as well.

SoLocal is truly an app that is unlike any other. It will keep users connected to their communities more than ever before and provide useful information no matter where they travel. It will benefit event hosts by increasing traffic to their events and will make the way people find local events much easier.
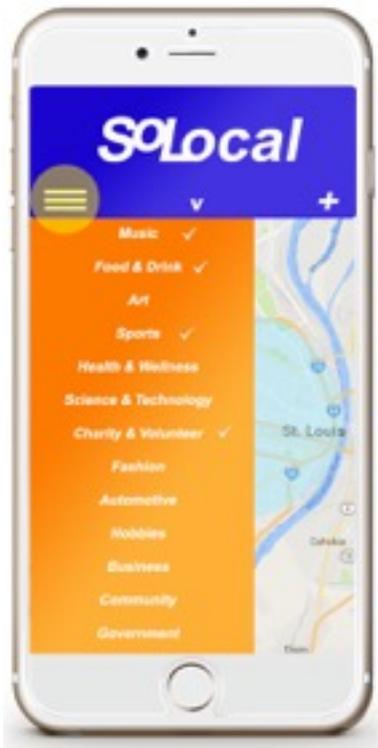
Figure 1: Interest Menu
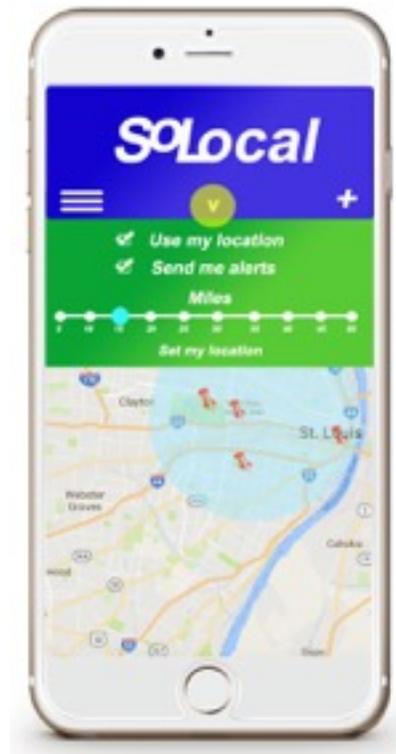
Figure 2: Location Menu

Figure 3: Post Event 1
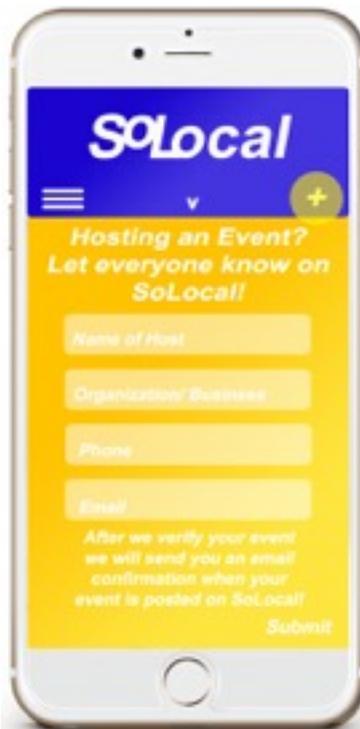
Figure 4: Post Event 2

Figure 5: Push Notification

Works Cited

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