Improving the UX of the Visit Harford App & Website

Project Supervised by Bill Kules, HCIM Program Director
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Supervised by Bill Kules, HCIM Program Director

The University of Maryland, College Park
PALS - Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability
An Initiative of the National Center for Smart Growth

Gerrit Knaap, NCSG Executive Director
Kimberly Fisher, PALS Director
Agenda

● Project Focus
● Background Research
● Participant Information
● Interview Process
● Major Findings
● Product Concepts
Project Focus

- Promote county tourism to visitors
- Expand the website and app’s core user group

By understanding the

- Experience of trip planning
- Information required to make decisions
Background Research

1. Analyzed the Harford County website and app
2. Comparative analysis of similar websites
   ○ Oregon
   ○ Idaho
   ○ Cleveland
3. Analyzed popular trip planning sites
# Participant Information

- 8 participants

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Profession</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20 - 30</td>
<td>Undergrad, Grad Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30 - 40</td>
<td>PhD Students, Doctor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40 - 60</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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Interview Process

- On-site interviews
- ~ 60 minutes each
- Retrospective and observational
- Looking to understand
  - process of trip planning
  - information requirements
  - role of technology, friends, and family
Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis
- Identified
  - types of users
  - workflow and pain points
  - use of technology
Major Findings

What our users need:
I prefer to plan my own trip and meticulously plan for every minute. I organize my trip as a list of things I want to do and see.
Insights

- I plan for nearby activities and attractions
- I plan for where I am going to eat while travelling
- I plan for where I am going to stay
- I check the distance to my destination to estimate travel time
- I plan activities according to my calendar

Design for easy information discovery and allow users to create a custom trip plan on the website
Design Ideas

- Add option to make itinerary that syncs with your personal calendar
- Support trip planning by displaying accurate and up-to-date information about future events
- Give weather, based on event options
- Give information on the different ways to access and the time it would take
I like diverse experiences and exploring new things when I have time. I make every moment of my free time count.
Insights

- I like to see new places and explore new things
- I may change my plans if I discover something new that interests me
- I like to visit cultural and historical places
- I like to do outdoor activities
- I like to meet new people and socialize

Design for exploration - highlight nearby activities, and experiences unique to Harford County
Design Ideas

- Advertise interesting and novel experiences — attractions unique to Harford County
- Group activities so it’s are easier to find what people want to do
- Suggest pre-planned experiences for travelers to the county
I ask people, check social media and read user reviews to decide what to do, where to stay and where to eat.
Insights

- I read user reviews to find people to stay with
- I read user reviews to learn more about travel destinations and attractions
- I find user reviews a trustworthy source of information
- I believe high ratings represent a good experience

Design for social experience - show pictures, reviews, ratings and comments from other users
Design Ideas

- Show user testimonials for activities and places in Harford County
- Show what people are talking about on social media — Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
- Provide discussion threads for people to talk about their experiences and ask questions
Good visuals attract me. I make decisions on where to go, based on the pictures I see. They help me get an overall idea of the place.
Insights

- If I like the picture, I look for more information about it
- Pictures help me in selecting attractions to visit
- I compare images on different websites to make sure the place is as advertised
- I visually explore areas to see if I like visiting them
- I look at pictures to get a sense of the area

Design for visual delight - use pictures to highlight events, activities and more
Design Ideas

- Relevant and important information should be easy to find
- Put attractive pictures on the main page. Replace generic stock images on the main webpage with images from the county
- Include a virtual tour that allows users to get a sense of Harford County before they visit
Common Frustrations

- I ignore information not relevant to my trip
- I find visual clutter distracting and annoying
- I find too much information overwhelming

Extraneous, irrelevant and poorly designed information will cause frustration
Product Concepts

A brand new world
Ideation

Combining insights into cohesive experiences through user stories
1. Home Page

Show everyone how fun Harford can be
Stunning pictures from real users to draw in tourists

Clear, unobtrusive website functions

Real-time social media feed linked to events to capture the latest buzz

Unique experiences at Harford qualified by impactful testimonials
2. Find Events

Let’s find your next muse
Create curated event lists to appeal to people’s diverse interests

Spark curiosity with visuals and event details

Stargazing & Wine
Enjoy a quaint evening with the stars, friends and a selection of our finest wines

Northwest Retreat
50 people going

Show ratings and who else is going to encourage further exploration

Create curated event lists to appeal to people’s diverse interests
Come join us for an evening of great food and good vibes!


**Timings**
- 12, 13, 14 Dec 2018
- 2 - 4 pm, 6 - 9 pm

**Contact Us**
- 245-442-2356
- 245-442-2356
- seafoodfestival@harford.com

**Reviews (53) Comments (24)**
- Rachel
  - Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again.
- Jessica
  - Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again.
- Leigh
  - Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again.
- Dave
  - Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again.

**More events to discover...**
- Forest Trail Hiking
- Stargazing & Wine
- Countryside Trip
- Mountain Climbing
- Eastside Range

**Pictures from real user’s social media perceived as genuine**

**A map that opens to show the event and nearby activities**

**User reviews increase confidence and provide recommendations**

**Organizer contact information to answer any questions**

**Related and nearby events to create a cohesive trip**
Viewing a user’s highlights through social media tags

Map that shows their check-ins to promote event discovery

A collection of the experiences they liked and recommend
3. Smart Itinerary

Your trip, at a glance
Upcoming events, with booking status

Prompts to add events from favorites

Intelligent suggestions for saving money — alternate events or dates
Questions?