

Travel Together - A Travel Mate finder

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Abstract: *In an increasingly interconnected world, the desire to explore new destinations and connect with like-minded travelers has become a prevalent social phenomenon. Our dynamic project aimed at creating a unique online platform, a Traveling Social Networking Website with Group Chat and Destination Groups, to address these desires. The project seeks to empower travel enthusiasts by providing a comprehensive and interactive digital space where users can plan, share, and document their journeys collaboratively. At its core, the platform offers three key features.*

The website enables users to create personalized profiles and connect with a global community of travelers. By sharing their travel experiences, photos, and itineraries, individuals can inspire and be inspired by others, fostering a sense of camaraderie among explorers.

An integral part of the platform is the group chat feature, which allows travelers to form and join groups based on their common interests, travel plans, or destinations. These real-time chat groups offer users a convenient way to exchange tips, seek advice, coordinate trips, and connect with fellow adventurers before, during, and after their journeys.

To enhance the travel planning experience, the website introduces Destination Groups, dedicated spaces where users can find detailed information, recommendations, and discussions about specific locations. These groups facilitate in-depth exploration and knowledge-sharing, catering to both seasoned globetrotters and first-time travelers.

The Traveling Social Networking Website with Group Chat and Destination Groups project aims to foster a sense of global community among travelers, providing a digital hub for wanderers to find inspiration, connect with peers, and make their journeys memorable. This abstract offers a glimpse into the innovative platform, which harnesses the power of technology to bring travelers together, making the world a smaller and more accessible place for all who yearn to explore it.

Keywords: Travel, Online Platform, Website, Group Chat

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of numerous traveling and trekking groups has opened up exciting opportunities for travel enthusiasts to explore various destinations in the company of like-minded individuals. These groups encompass a diverse range of travelers, including friends, families, colleagues, and even strangers brought together by a shared passion for adventure. Recognizing this trend, we have embarked on the development of a Python-based project called "Travel Together - A Travel Mate finder". This project is carefully designed to cater to the needs of travel enthusiasts, offering them a platform to connect with different traveling groups.

Through our platform, individuals can seamlessly link up with groups heading to their desired destinations. It simplifies the process of finding and interacting with travel groups that align with their interests. Users have the ability to search for specific groups and engage in conversations with their members to gather additional information, thereby facilitating informed decisions about their travel plans[1].

By combining elements of social networking, real-time communication, and destination-specific communities, our project aspires to create an all-encompassing platform that caters to the evolving needs and desires of modern-day

travelers. This innovative platform envisions a paradigm shift in the way travelers connect, plan, and embark on their journeys. It encourages a sense of global community among individuals who share a common passion for exploration. Our aim is to assist travel enthusiasts in linking up with different travel groups, enabling them to plan their trips with ease.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED WORK

Travel-Based Social Networking: The idea of connecting travelers through online social networks has gained traction with the increasing popularity of social media. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have allowed travelers to share their experiences and seek recommendations from their networks. However, travel-specific social networking platforms like TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree, and more recently, Travello, have emerged to cater specifically to the travel community[2]. These platforms enable travelers to create profiles, share their travel journeys, and seek advice from fellow explorers. "Connecting Explorers" extends this concept, aiming to create a dedicated space for travelers to build connections, fostering a sense of belonging within a global community.

Group chat features have become integral to travel planning and coordination. WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger groups have long been popular among travelers seeking to organize trips and stay in touch. However, a rising demand for more dedicated and structured group chat functionalities has led to the emergence of travel-specific applications like GroupMe and Slack. "Connecting Explorers" recognizes the importance of real-time communication in travel planning, providing a seamless in-app chat feature for users to connect and coordinate with others who share their travel interests [3].

III. ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM

User Adoption and Engagement:

The challenge in this context is convincing travelers to embrace and actively participate in a new social networking platform when established alternatives like Facebook, Instagram, and specialized travel apps already exist. Travelers are often entrenched in their habits and may be resistant to change. To address this, the project needs a robust marketing and user acquisition strategy to attract an initial user base. Additionally, the platform must offer unique features and incentives to keep users engaged. These might include exclusive content, travel rewards, or gamification elements, which can help make the platform more appealing and draw in users [4].

Trust and Credibility:

In the travel industry, establishing trust and credibility among users is paramount, as travelers rely on the platform for accurate and trustworthy information and recommendations. The challenge lies in maintaining the integrity of the content and community. To address this, the platform should implement a robust user verification system and content moderation. This ensures that false information, spam, or misleading content doesn't proliferate, thereby preserving trust. Encouraging user reviews and ratings can also play a significant role in building trust within the community [5].

User Experience and Accessibility:

Ensuring a seamless and user-friendly experience across various devices and for users with different accessibility needs is a complex task. The platform can address this challenge by investing in responsive design, user testing, and accessibility features to make it inclusive and easy to navigate for all users.

IV. PROPOSED WORK AND OBJECTIVE

Objective: To develop platform which will help travel enthusiasts connect with various travel groups and plan their trips accordingly.

Proposed Work:

Our proposed application provides you join travel clubs of your own city or town, meet up with like-minded travelers who are staying close to you. You can also setup your own travel profile in several categories like Adventure, weekenders, mountaineering, international tourists' clubs, women travel clubs, family travelers, trekking/hiking travelers, heritage travelers, ecotourism travelers, luxury travelers club etc. where all this detailed information is not available in the existing travel applications [6].

The additional feature provided with in the proposed application which is a big advantage for you to share the trip. You can plan a trip and publish it to find a travel companion. You may want to go on a trip as your wish and planning, you just need to publish your trip itinerary, and anybody interested in travelling at the same place can contact you to join your trip. Forum of travelers help each other where you can ask a question and get travel tips, advises for your upcoming trip [7].

The idea of sharing the trip with unknown travel buddies is not available widely in the existing applications. You can instantly update your travel stories and share your past experiences, you can also share the destinations you have visited so far or your road trips experiences, provide a travel guide and tips to help other travelers help to get there, places to visit, best time to visit, best places to stay and signature dishes to try out or if you are a photographer you can also share your photos on photo blog about your dream destinations you want to visit in future and even your travel resolutions [8].

Additional feature provided is you can as well get to contact with the trip arrangers. If you are unable to find an organizer around you of your comfort, our application helps you get information of these organizers and contact them.

V. SYSTEM DESIGN

The discussed functionalities of two user groups are provided with the help of the backend with a microservices architecture, where different servers are set up for different backend services of the project. The database manages the data in the form of nodes and relations. The compute server generates recommendations with help of the Knowledge Graph Attention Network algorithm [9]. The API server communicates between the mobile application and the database, compute server, and external services. It responds to the requests from the mobile application, authenticates each request from the user using the Firebase Authentication service. While the media asset management for hosting rich media is done using Firebase Cloud Storage.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to provide an all-in-one mobile application that caters to the different needs of the travellers during the three phases of travelling i.e., planning, the trip and after the trip. It also provides travel agencies, hoteliers and local business owners to showcase and market their products and services. The complete implementation of the system with its secure backend and mobile application demonstrates how the proposed system improves the experience of the traveller during the process of planning, booking, and enjoying a trip [10]. It also showcases the consortium of these travellers with travel agencies and businesses on the same platform who provide their products and services to customers. This is accompanied by the recommendations generated by the advanced recommendation model Knowledge Graph Attention Network and demonstrates its utilization in a real life working environment [11].

VII. FUTURE SCOPE

In the future, we may try to add additional features to the platform to provide a better and more complete experience. Some of these features are, but not limited to, an interactive map implementation to help travellers to locate public services near them, a messaging system which would better the communication between the traveller and businesses and also let travellers chat with each other, integration with other travel apps to expand our database to improve user recommendations. We may also plan to take the recommendation model ahead by improving on the shortcomings of our recommendation system like tackling the cold start problem and warm start problem, so that new users can get better recommendations on the platform.

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