

InternNet – a Mobile App designed to empower and unite young professionals in their journeys of moving to a new city

SI529 Online Communities Design Project

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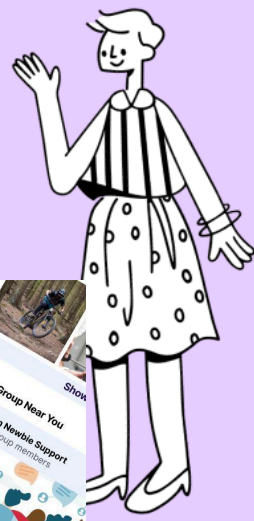
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Elevator Pitch



Elevator Pitch

Introducing InternNet! The Ultimate App Designed To Empower And Unite New Grads And Interns Navigating The Exciting Yet Challenging Journey Of Moving To A New City.

Overview:

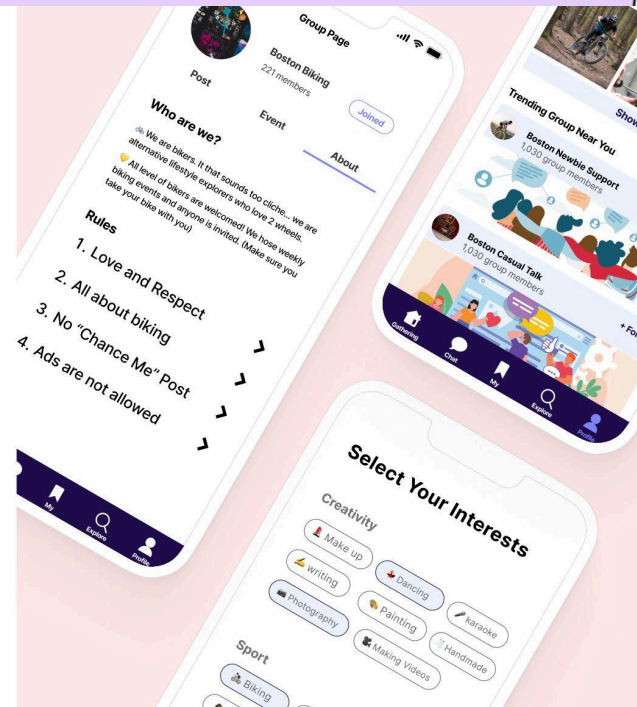
Our mobile-friendly platform bridge, fostering challenges of starting a career and relocating.

Audience:

Young professionals who just relocate to new area, making it easier for interns and recent graduates to connect, both online and in person.

Revenue Model:

Ads sales, sponsored posts, promoted content



InternNet is an online community for young professionals, particularly interns and new grads, to bond over a shared experience- moving to a new city for work.

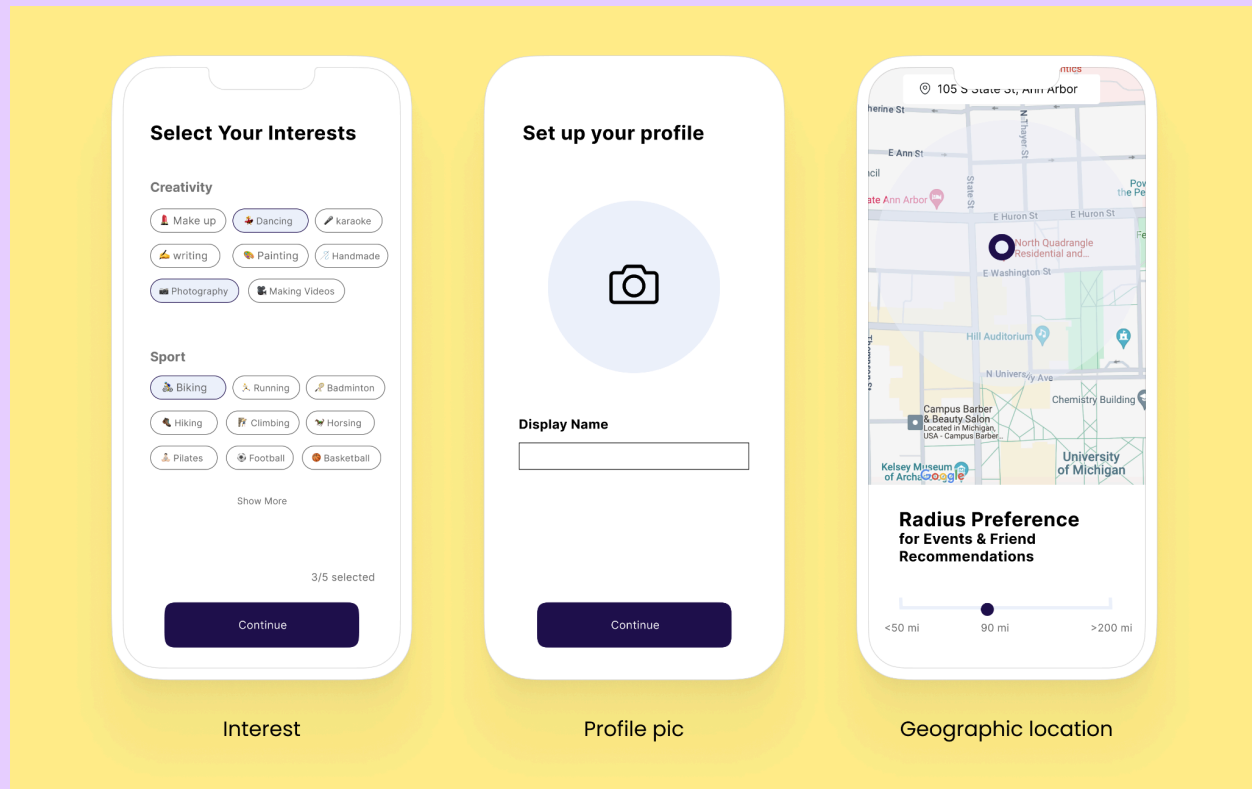
As cities offer a higher number of job opportunities, relocation for occupational reasons has been a common phenomenon in modern society (Hippler, 2009). However, life in the workforce involves constant change, whereas college life is more predictable. The transition and the moving are never easy. The loss of friends, community, and even familiar routines that occur during a relocation can contribute a significant proportion of the stress, anxiety, and overall adjustment difficulty to the new environment (Fedor, 2003). By gathering people facing similar challenges in life, InternNet aims to support and facilitate the process of building a new social network with features fostering online conversations and offline events.

As a for-profit application, the revenue is based on app advertisement sales, sponsored posts, and promoted content.



Onboarding & Profile Creation

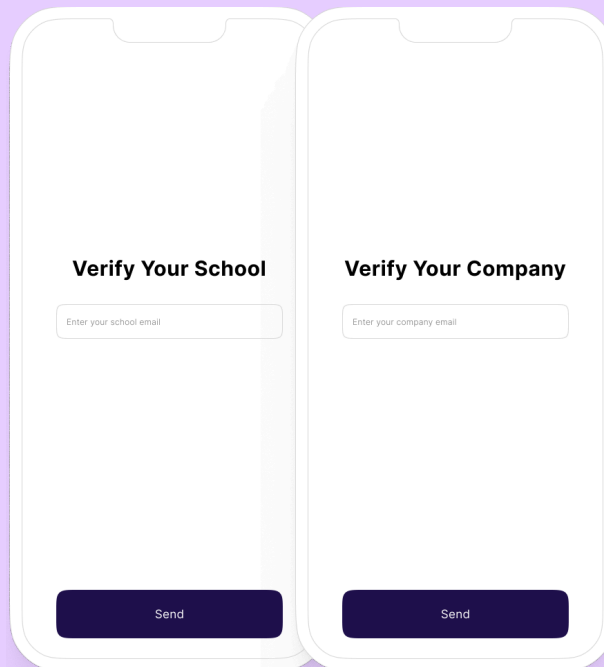
Collecting interest data, verifying identity, and streamlining the app navigation



The onboarding process is not only the first step to setting up an account but also a start to building a new social network. This includes selecting interests and setting event and connection preferences, as well as school and company verification to ensure a safe and trustworthy community. It introduces the community's mission and shows the gathering places on the platform. This helps members understand where and how they can engage with groups and events and build connections, that meet “clear purpose” and “distinct and extensible gathering places” from 9 Timeless Design Principles for Community-Building. (Kim, 1998)



More protection with identity verification via organization emails



School Verification

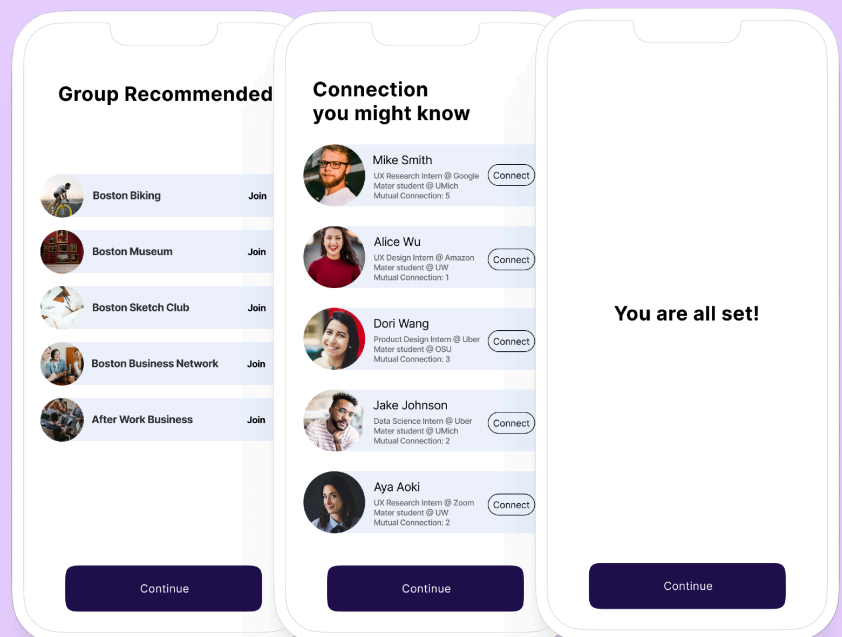
Work Verification

School and company verification is done by entering the school email that ends with edu and the company email with its specified suffix, this will make sure that the person registered on our platform is real and the shown information is reliable.



Customized recommendations for streamlined app navigation

Based on the interests the user chose before and the verification of school and company, the platform will generate recommended groups related to the interests, and recommend people from the same school or company or who have the same preference of radius to build connections and receive event information, which might share a mutual background and have more possibilities to know each other and form a relationship.



Recommended Group

Recommended People

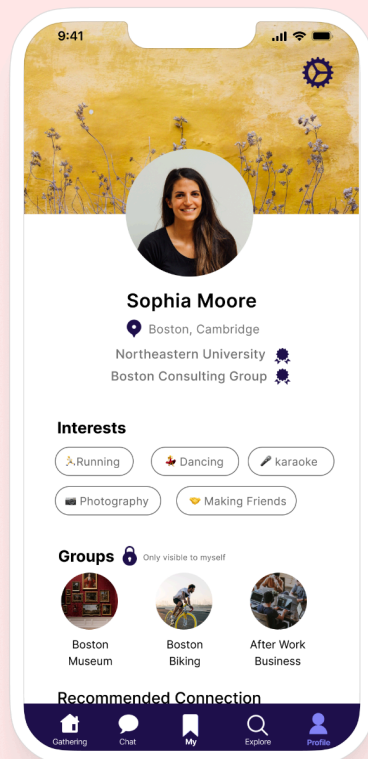
All Set



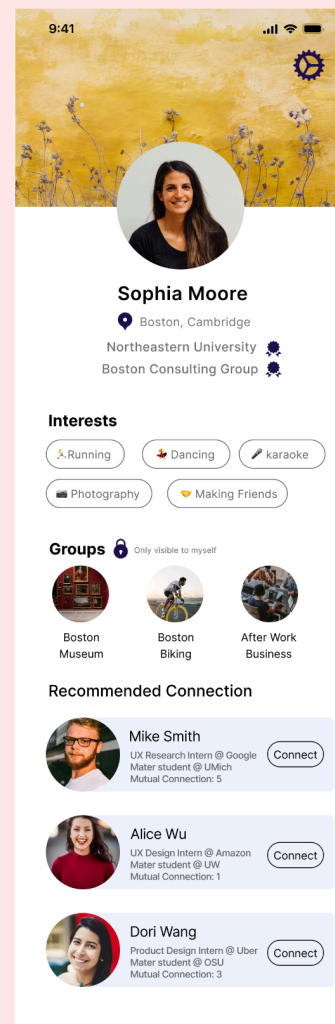
Profile Overview

A place to show YOU

The user profile page illustrates the user's name, location, school, company, and interests. Based on this mix and preferences set, the system provides recommendations for the existing members to connect and the groups to join as a starting point that streamlines the navigation of new users. The profile evolves based on the user's journey and the interests changed, which meets “evolving profiles” and “representations” from 9 Timeless Design Principles for Community-Building (Kim, 1998).



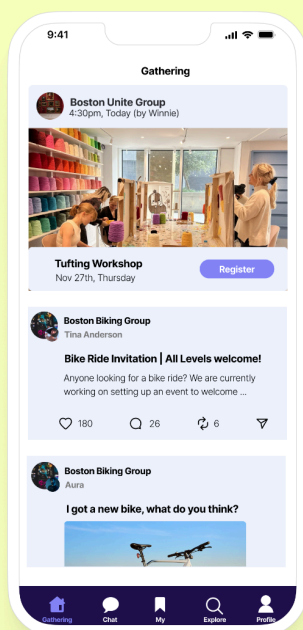
My Profile



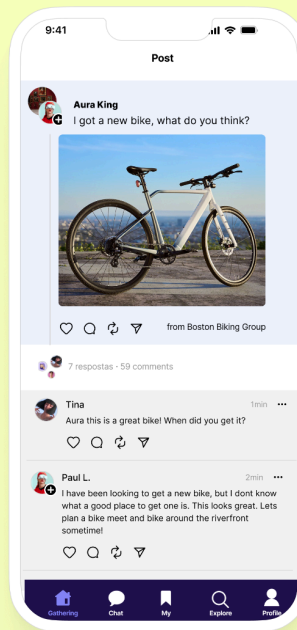


Gathering & Event

A dynamic feed to see what people are talking about



Gathering

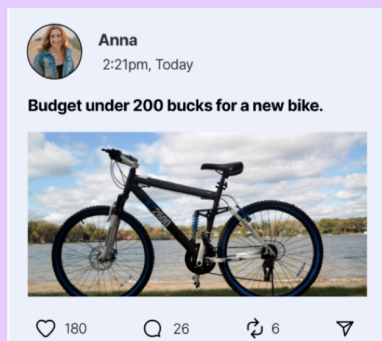


Post Threads

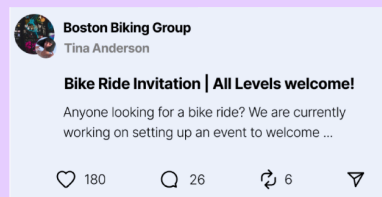
Gathering is a vibrant space where users can participate in events tailored to their interests. Whether it's a casual meetup at a local coffee shop or a themed party to celebrate milestones, our Gathering tab is the go-to destination for exciting experiences. Celebrate discussions that matter to the users by interacting with the threads.



Event information on Gathering



Picture post on Gathering



Text post on Gathering





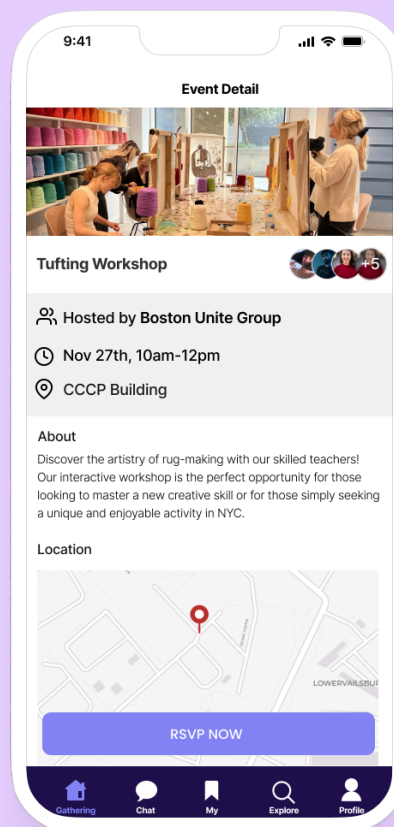
Connect with group members through dynamic threads.

The Gathering tab features discussion threads that function like interactive message boards, allowing the users to share their thoughts, plans, and experiences. Engage in conversations, offer insights, and make plans to meet up at events – all within the app! Click on a thread and see what other people are saying in the comments, drop a comment with personal insight, or like a comment to show your support.

Keeping in mind that “A common mistake that online community designers make is to imagine all the topics that their hoped-for members might want to discuss, and to create separate forums or chat rooms for each topic” (Resnick, 239), this feature creates a broader space for discussion amongst the users where “broader range of topics and thus not completely match a visitor’s interests, it will at least limit the number of separate access costs that need to be paid to examine the community’s content”(Resnick, 239).

Foster new relationships via Events

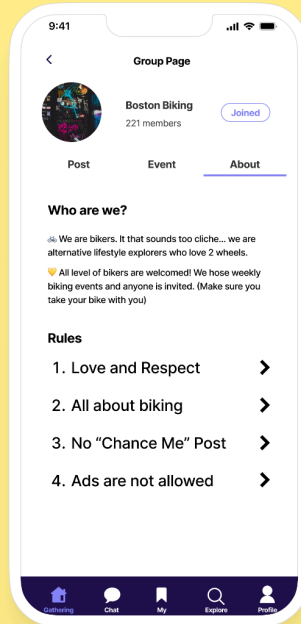
Never miss out on the action, meeting new people is one click away! The Gathering tab allows the users to explore upcoming events and easily RSVP to those that pique their interest. From networking mixers to weekend hikes, InternNet ensures every user is always in the loop, helping build a network that extends beyond the workplace. Click on an event to view the details such as date, time, and place, and hit RSVP. To account for Amy Jo’s 9th community design principle of connecting the real world with online, this feature will create seamless and meaningful connections between online platforms or digital communities and the physical world (Kim, 1998)



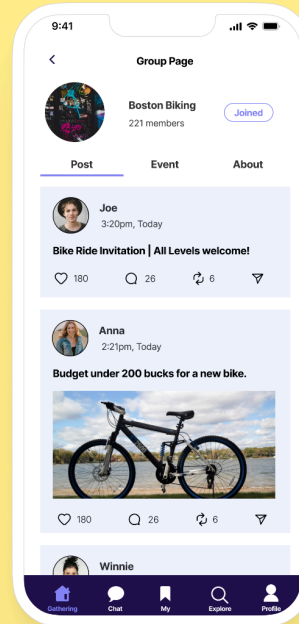
Event Detail

Group

A space to find like-minded people



Group Details – About



Group Details – Post

Group is where everyone can find their community with topic-specific information. Interest-based groups help members solidify a sense of belongingness that members probing the online presence with similar elements of online identity (Bruckman, 2022).

The users can post, reply, or make reactions to others' posts with threads. The group welcomes more public yet intimate conversations based on topics of interest. Group conversations could build new knowledge from highly dynamic threads. "Over time, ideas compete, combine, fork, and reemerge. Some ideas that are successfully incorporated into a convergent idea attract energy from other ideas, morphing into new ideas with new possibilities." (Faraj et al., 2011)

Group facilitators hold the responsibility to create rules, or codes of conduct, and provide appropriate guidance for community members. Quoted from the nine principles for building community, it is important to

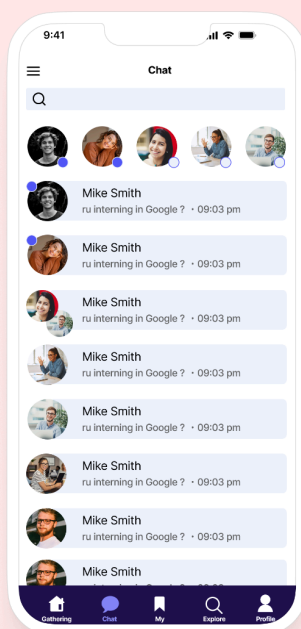




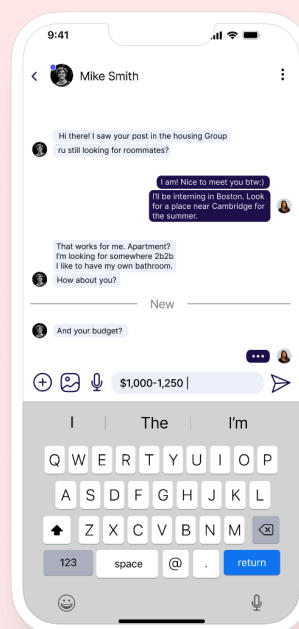
“Define a Clear-Yet-Flexible Code of Conduct” (Kim, 1998) for constructing a successful online community group. The key goal is to make sure group conflicts can be handled well and contribute to a positive shaping of group cultures, facilitating InternNet to create a more welcoming environment for newly relocated members.

Chat

Keep things private and enjoy small-group conversation



Chat Page



Chat Detail

Chat stands as a private gathering place and is formed by a conversation between two or more members. Chat allows the users to extend the space according to their interests and needs and opens opportunities for people to build connections with more intimate conversations. This follows one of the nine principles for building community by Jo Kim - Create Distinct, Member-Extensible Gathering Places (Kim, A. J., 1998).

Chat can also be seen as a private place for knowledge transmission and collaboration. This feature also promotes high fluidity in the knowledge collaboration process within the community through a “highly flexible

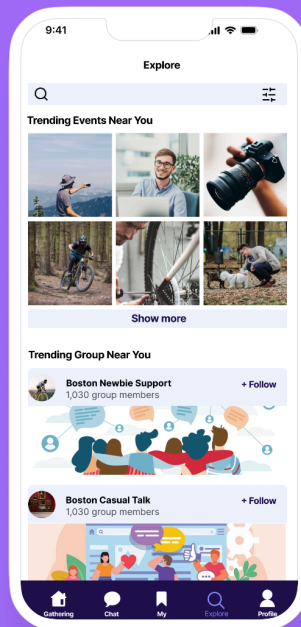


process with permeable boundaries” which allows the users to start a conversation with any other people in this online community (Faraj et al., 2011). The design of Chat employed shared design elements of the messaging feature on digital platforms including messaging, sending, receiving, reacting, and typing. The clearly defined and familiar design could be a helpful signifier for newcomers who are just starting to find their way around to quickly find where they can start private conversations (Kim, 1998).

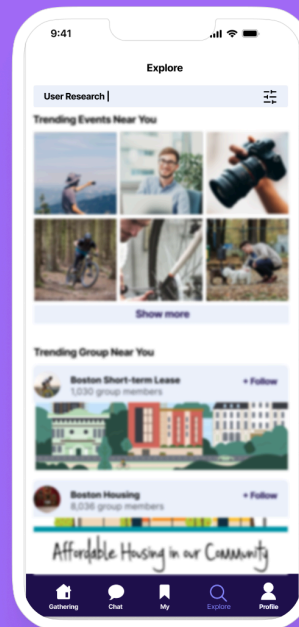


Explore

One search to find everything needed



Exploration

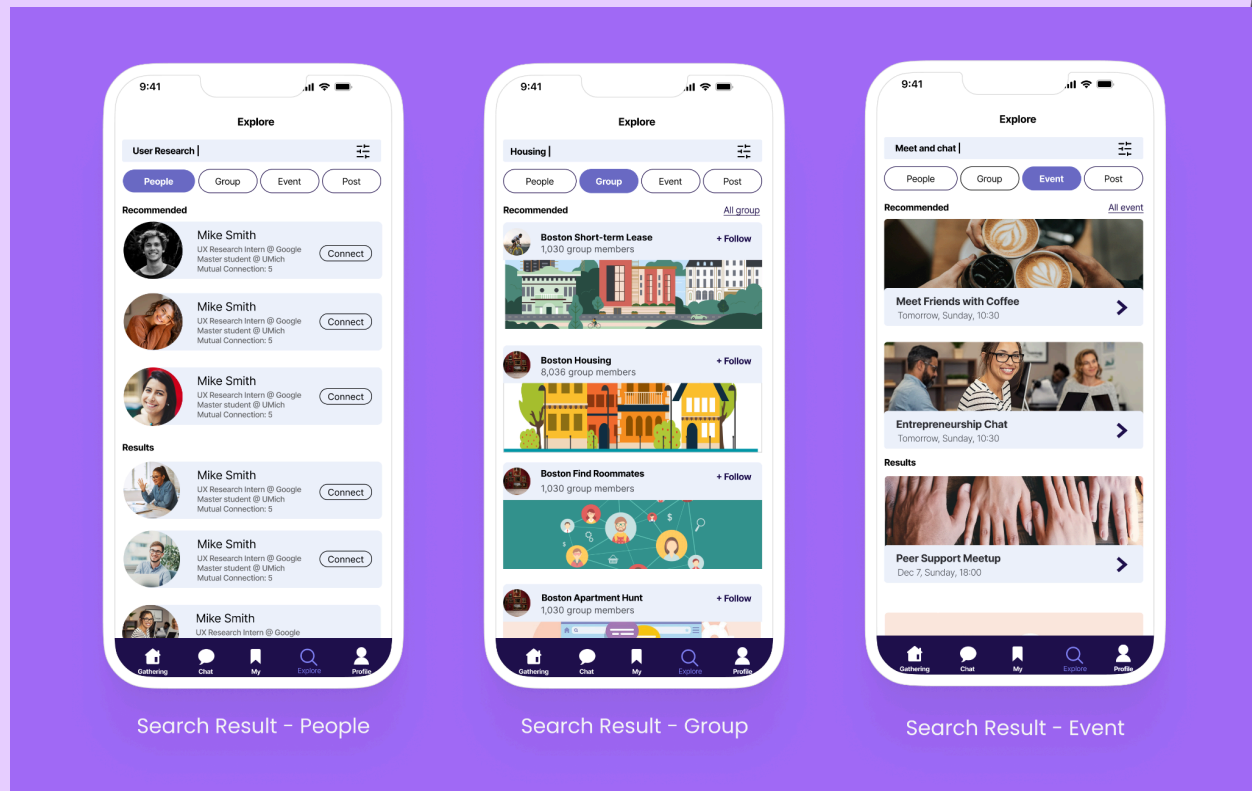


Exploration - Search Entry

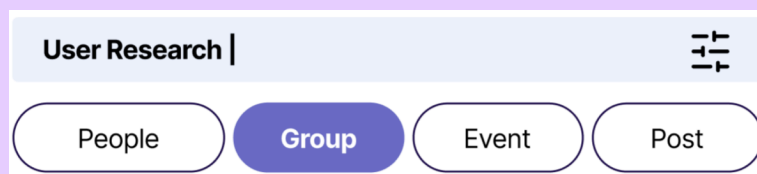
Explore is a place that shows the overall space and links directly to areas of interest by active searching or access to the list of all groups or events. it allows members to search for content and discussion areas that cluster around particular interests. A recommendation mechanism is designed as a personalized map of the system for members to access information on the online community that is suggested based on their interests. This also facilitates one of the nine principles for building



community by Jo Kim - Create Distinct, Member-Extensible Gathering Places (Kim, A. J., 1998).



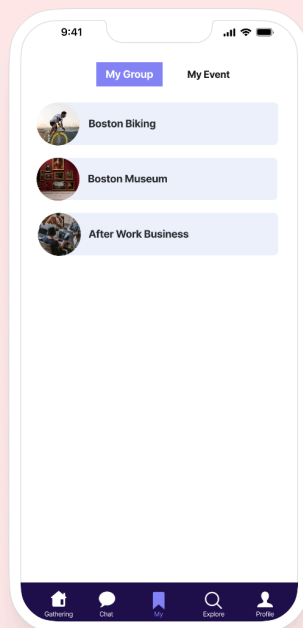
Explore helps members quickly find the Post, Groups, People, and Events with filters for each category for searching. While members of the common identity groups reported feeling more attached to their group as a whole than to their fellow group members (Ren et al., 2007), Explore fosters the process of users finding and joining the identity groups of their interest in this online community.



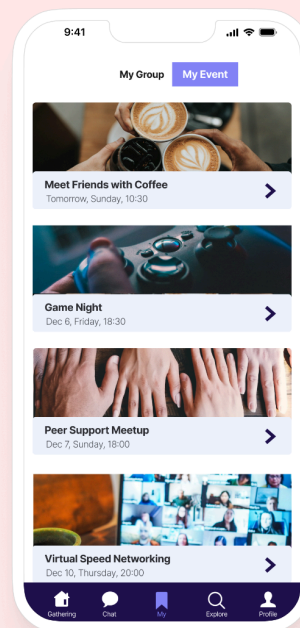
Filter for intuitive searching

My Group & Event

This is a personalized space to conveniently manage groups and event schedules, which makes young professionals more able to adapt to a new city. It also reflects the journey of the user to build professional relationships and the networking process. The online events also align with real-world activities and help build actual connections beyond the online community. This meets “sub-groups” “cyclic events”, and “real-world integration” from 9 Timeless Design Principles for Community-Building. (Kim, 1998)



My Group



My Event



User Scenarios

The two user scenarios here demonstrate how our target users - the interns and new grads, can interact with the application in multiple ways from searching for potential roommates for summer sublease to building a social network in a new city. The scenarios illustrate the utility and how this online community fosters interaction, collaboration, and communication among its members.



Scenario #1 - Abby (intern)



Abby is a university junior at the University of Michigan. She is going to start her first-ever summer internship in Boston, which is a city she has never been to before. She has no friends or relatives and will need to find a short-term lease to stay for 12 weeks.

Since she knows nobody in this city, Abby needs to build a new network. She would love to meet with other interns within her company or outside of her company to explore the city or get a better sense of

her future career and working environment from others' experiences.

She goes to the **InternNet** before her internship starts and builds her profile. She joins the Sublease and Housing Group and chats with other users who are also new to Boston and looking for short-term leases. Because of InternNet, Abby meets a potential roommate, Cindy who is going to start her internship at Harvard Hospital, with a similar preference regarding a lease, and are interning in someplace near each other. She ends up signing the lease with Cindy. After Abby arrives in Boston, she goes out with her new roommates and other friends she meets on InternNet and explores the city together. InternNet makes Abby feel comfortable meeting new people in person since they are verified based on their company or university. She finds a community with newcomers with whom she can share similar feelings and explore new places.



Scenario #2 - Joe (New Grad)



Joe is a 24-year-old fresh new grad who just moved to Boston for his very first Product Designer job at a local tech company. He does not know anyone from here, but he knows that Boston is going to be a home for him for a while. Therefore, he wants to connect with new buddies who are also Junior in their career and also just physically moved to the same area, looking for long-term friendships with reliable people. Joe does not want to expose himself to strangers who may catfish with fake identities. Joe is

frustrated when he just gets stuck into LinkedIn-style friendships. He is looking forward to building more personal connections outside only talking about work.





He comes to InternNet to explore possible peers and events around him. He wants to know if there is anyone who also happens to start working in the tech industry, like how he is at this moment. He reaches out to those who are in the same industry to learn about their experiences. Joe also finds this cool biking club that welcomes all levels of bikers, so he and his friends join the online community and hang out together at the weekly biking gathering. With InternNet, Joe becomes more settled in his new environment, building new friendships, and exploring new lifestyles with his community with both online and offline conversations.



Competitor Analysis

As InternNet does not have a direct competitor, we surveyed features that build up the key interaction of our solution including offline events posting, interest group formation, online forums and community forming, and social networking.

A total of four applications, LinkedIn, Handshake, Bumble, and Meetup were selected based on the criteria mentioned above. We analyzed their target audience, features related to our community, and how they foster the formation of online community and member interaction.

	 LinkedIn	 Handshake	 Bumble	 Meetup
Audience	Established professionals, job seekers, and businesses	college students and recent graduates looking for internships and entry-level jobs	people want to find romantic relationships, make new friends and build professional networks	people want to build professional connections or just make friends
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Profiles showcase work experience, education, skills, and endorsements. -Users can join and participate in industry-specific groups. -Newsfeed for updates and sharing content. -Limited event functionality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -User profiles focus on education, skills, and job preferences. -Provides career-related resources and guidance. -Lists virtual career fairs, job expos, and workshops. -Emphasizes sharing resumes, cover letters, and other job-related documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 modes with different goals - match people based on interests/experiences/habits/ personality/... - match expires if not initiated - In heterosexual pairings, only women can start conversations - upgrade for feature like invisible mode, SuperSwipe and Spotlight to increase visibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - suggest groups to join after each user selects their goal and interests - users can create/ manage interest-based groups - show local events happen and can make an RSVP.
Online Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Users can message connections individually or in groups. -Members can follow companies to receive updates and insights. -Features like LinkedIn Learning and LinkedIn Articles, allowing professionals to acquire new skills, share knowledge, and stay updated with industry trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hosts virtual career fairs and events where students can connect with employers. -Messaging features that allow students to communicate with employers and career advisors. -Career-related groups or organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People get to know each other by looking at user profiles to find out what others's interests and activities - Users can have conversations with matches - Virtual events and promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Users join different online groups - Users attend events and meet people in real life - Users have the option to offer feedback and assign ratings to events and organizers of groups

Ethical Reflection



One primary ethical concern revolves around user safety and well-being within the app's community features, such as chats, group chats, and threads. To foster open communication and safeguard against potential misuse, the app prioritizes content moderation and user conduct guidelines and does not enforce any extreme measures such as banning or removing people off the platform, as suggested by “results suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach will fail some users while privileging others” (Schoenebeck, 2021). Respect for user privacy is another critical ethical consideration, necessitating the implementation of stringent data protection measures and transparent communication regarding data usage.

The app's in-person events feature poses ethical challenges related to ensuring a secure and inclusive environment. Ethical event planning will be conducted through identity verification (as part of the onboarding process, but also in person) and the establishment of a clear code of conduct to prevent any instances of harassment or discrimination. The app is designed to promote diversity and inclusion actively, acknowledging the unique experiences and backgrounds of its users.

Furthermore, the ethical reflection extends to the app's potential impact on mental health. As we learned through Meier and Johnson's “Social comparison and envy on social media: A critical guide”, “earlier research finds social comparison and envy to be common on social media and linked to lower well-being. Yet, increasingly, newer studies contradict this conclusion, finding positive links to well-being as well as heterogeneous, person-specific, conditional, and reverse or reciprocal effects” (Meire, 2022). While the aim is to create a supportive community, there's a responsibility to address the potential negative effects of social comparison and competition among users. The app incorporates resources for mental health support and encourages positive interactions to mitigate any adverse effects on user well-being.



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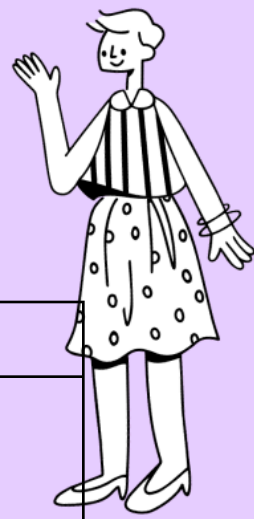


Appendix. Competitor Analysis Chart

	LinkedIn	Handshake	Bumble	Meetup
Overview	<p>LinkedIn is currently one of the more popular ways for students, interns, and young professionals to connect with each other and mutual in a professional setting.</p> <p>LinkedIn mainly offers virtual events and webinars, with InternNet we aim to facilitate in-person interactions and local event discovery.</p>	<p>Handshake's primary emphasis is on job search, recruitment, and career development, while with InternNet we aim to implement social networking, particularly in a local context with in person event opportunities.</p>	<p>Bumble is an online dating and networking platform designed to enable every user to establish secure and positive connections.</p> <p>The matching algorithm that gathers user interests, experiences, habits, and personality traits is inspiring. The time limit for starting conversations may motivate users to initiate interactions.</p>	<p>Meetup is a platform where people with similar interests, hobbies, or jobs can easily plan and join in-person or virtual gatherings and events.</p> <p>Users have the opportunity to become members of groups that align with their passions/careers and engage with people through offline events. Ratings and feedback are important for keeping the community good and making people trust it.</p>
Target Audience	<p>LinkedIn caters to a broad professional audience, including established professionals, job seekers, and businesses.</p>	<p>-Handshake primarily targets college students and recent graduates looking for internships and entry-level jobs.</p> <p>-User profiles focus on education, skills, and job preferences.</p> <p>-Provides career-related resources and guidance.</p> <p>-Lists virtual career fairs, job expos, and workshops.</p> <p>-Handshake emphasizes sharing resumes, cover letters, and other job-related documents.</p> <p>-Handshake hosts virtual career fairs and events where students can connect with employers.</p> <p>-Messaging features that allow students to communicate with employers and career advisors.</p> <p>-Career-related groups or organizations.</p>	<p>Targets people finding romantic relationships, making new friends and building professional networks.</p>	<p>Target people shared interests, want to build professional connections or just make friends</p>
Notable Features	<p>- Profiles showcase work experience, education, skills, and endorsements.</p> <p>-Users can join and participate in industry-specific groups.</p> <p>-Newsfeed for updates and sharing content. Limited event functionality.</p>	<p>-Handshake primarily targets college students and recent graduates looking for internships and entry-level jobs.</p> <p>-User profiles focus on education, skills, and job preferences.</p> <p>-Provides career-related resources and guidance.</p> <p>-Lists virtual career fairs, job expos, and workshops.</p> <p>-Handshake emphasizes sharing resumes, cover letters, and other job-related documents.</p> <p>-Handshake hosts virtual career fairs and events where students can connect with employers.</p> <p>-Messaging features that allow students to communicate with employers and career advisors.</p> <p>-Career-related groups or organizations.</p>	<p>- 3 modes for people with different goals</p> <p>- match people based on interests/experiences/habits/personality/...</p> <p>- the match expires if not initiated</p> <p>- In heterosexual pairings, only women have the option to start conversations</p> <p>- upgrade to get a feature like invisible mode, get SuperSwipe and Spotlight to increase visibility</p>	<p>- suggest groups to join after each user selects their goal and interests, and will get more suggestions after joining some groups</p> <p>- users also can create and manage their interest-based groups</p> <p>- show different events happen in the area and can make an RSVP</p>
Online Community	<p>-Users can send messages to their connections, fostering one-on-one or group conversations.</p> <p>-Members can follow companies to receive updates and insights.</p> <p>-LinkedIn offers features like LinkedIn Learning and LinkedIn Articles, allowing professionals to acquire new skills, share knowledge, and stay updated with industry trends.</p>	<p>-Handshake primarily targets college students and recent graduates looking for internships and entry-level jobs.</p> <p>-User profiles focus on education, skills, and job preferences.</p> <p>-Provides career-related resources and guidance.</p> <p>-Lists virtual career fairs, job expos, and workshops.</p> <p>-Handshake emphasizes sharing resumes, cover letters, and other job-related documents.</p> <p>-Handshake hosts virtual career fairs and events where students can connect with employers.</p> <p>-Messaging features that allow students to communicate with employers and career advisors.</p> <p>-Career-related groups or organizations.</p>	<p>- people get to know each other by looking at user profiles to find out what others's interests and activities</p> <p>- users can have conversations with matches</p> <p>- virtual events and promotions</p>	<p>- users join different online groups</p> <p>- users attend events and meet people in real life</p> <p>- users have the option to offer feedback and assign ratings to events and organizers of groups</p>



Contribution Statement



Person	Work Completed
Jessie(Chieh-Hsi) Lin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Design and Mockups: Chat, Explore, Gathering&Event● Report write-up: Chat, Explore, User Scenarios-Abby, and elevator pitch● Report layout: execution, edit and export images for mockups
Xianxian Cheng	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Design and Mockups: Group, Gathering&Event, Design Mockup Consistency● Report write-up: Group, User Scenarios-Joe, and elevator pitch● Report layout: background design and export images for mockups
Kashaf Usman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Design and Mockups: Gathering&Event● Report write-up: Ethical Reflection, Gathering&Event, and Competitive Analysis-LinkedIn and Handshake
Anqi Wang	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Design and Mockups: Onboarding, Profile, Gathering&Event, My Groups&Events● Report write-up: Competitive Analysis-Bumble and Meetup, Group, Onboarding, Profile, My Groups&Events,● Report layout: export images for mockups

