

Project Description

A modernized, social media travel platform that acts as a personal journal that streamlines documenting a traveler's memories and future trips through the collection of flags, photos, durations, locations and necessary travel documents (input); and a journal that serves as a summarized record of all these user activities which will give traveler insights to other users (output).

Project Description

I envisioned it as an input-output product because I want each user input to mean something for other users. In summary, the platform will summarize and calculate the average user input, like the most travelled destination or the budget range per location, then share it with users that have yet to travel to said location—sort of a ratings-based system.

To give a brief a user flow: once logged into my platform, a user has the choice to either add a travel log (meaning the trip has already occurred or is occurring) or add a travel destination (a trip yet to be made) and the fields to fill out will vary depending on whether or not a user chooses a log versus a destination.

If a log is made, the user-flexible fields will include photos and notes; however, fields like location, budget range, weather conditions, dress code and an LGBTQ+ -friendliness rating are already pre-fixed wherein a user will only need to choose from a drop down or a specific rate. If a user chooses a travel destination, the fields will be limited only to the desired location and date(s) and will include a section for recommended destinations. These inputs, especially the logs, will produce insightful data for other users who wish to travel a certain location.

Since my platform heavily relies on user input, my top risk and ethical considerations include **data control, user understanding or misinterpretation and hateful (or even criminal) actors.**

Basic data collection of e-mail addresses and passwords are mandatory to protect one profile from another. However, the product is also designed to collect sensitive information like passport details or visa credentials. Having these on the system helps a user track important details, like expiration or application dates, but to manage this risk I chose to have these fields optional and generic, meaning the actual passport identification number(s) will not be required and rather only the country and date(s), so users have more control over the data they input into the system. These details are confidential and are set automatically to be private. The worst possible risk for collecting this type of data is if the system gets hacked or if private information leaks.

On another note, profile data that they can choose to either share or keep private are their actual travel logs and destinations. The details collected in these fields will vary; however, users may not be aware that whether or not they choose to make these public or private, the data collected from them will be computed into the overall average. For example, when a user has his travels private, their rating on the "weather conditions" and "LGBTQ+ -friendliness" fields will still be computed into the average for cases where other users want to know these basic ratings of a certain location or country. Users may not be aware of this function and may be surprised to know that their rating will still matter on the overall average scale despite having a private account.

I added budget range, weather conditions, LGBTQ+ -friendliness and dress code into the travel log fields because of the support it can give to other travelers—users trust users. If majority of users say that a certain location is sunny during May or June, others can believe so. This data is user generated; however, it does not imply that it is always true and completely trusting this becomes a risk to other users. Despite users trusting other users, user-generated content is always open to interpretation and correction.

Another consideration in regards with this rating system is finding the line between user freedom and restrictions. I wanted to limit their input on budget ranges, weather conditions, LGBTQ+ -friendliness and dress codes into only either multiple choices (sunny, rainy, fair, etc.) or ratings (very conservative to highly liberal) because I wanted to prevent hate actions and words on the platform; and rather make these fields uniform. This uniformity also means I am limiting the users from expressing, commenting and/or justifying. In a worst-case scenario, the rating system can even imply discrimination against a certain location.

As part of the principle of keeping or maintaining a hate-free platform, I currently chose not to have a comments section for any user travel log. User-to-user interaction will be limited to private messaging (added feature) or a thumbs up/down rating system. This decision, however, does not shield a user from harassment or stalking, especially since my platform requires a location log-in.

My platform barely has impact to addiction and employment considerations, if not completely null, since my platform does not require everyday-usage.