//Space

personal story

Hi! My name is Erica Swift, currently indebted $300+ to Chattanooga parking authority, and I have an idea to help ease parking frustrations from downtown Chattanooga parking. I am (or was) a student at UTC and I work downtown at TVA, but I recently moved about 10 mins away to live. After my move, I realized I now had to make a parking plan that worked with a changing schedule, a college student budget, and a heavy backpack.

customer, their problems, and sad current alternatives

If you are a Chattanoogan, then you know this struggle of finding decent parking downtown. Many of us circle downtown looking for a decent space, only to give up and either pay a high premium or walk 5 miles in the rain late to class, drenched, and out of breath (maybe that last bit is just personal experience). I have spent a lot of time asking others around me for advice on best parking practices. Online was not much help, either, because each parking provider distributes information separately and uniquely. In my search, I came to the conclusion that this is a problem I could solve simply with code. After all, as a Computer Engineer, my natural instinct is to automate. My goal with Space is to create an easily accessible on-demand app platform that gives you local parking data including lot availability, convenience, and prices.

my solution

Space will rely on data managed by Chattanooga's Open Data Portal. It will be hosted as a web application, in order to cater to the most platforms. Users will load the site and immediately be presented with a map of downtown covered in dots indicating parking lots. Each dot will contain details in a cohesive, concise format, insuring not to overwhelm the user with excessive data.

benefits and my advantages

The concept is simple, but I believe it is the missing piece to solving Chattanooga's undeniable parking problem. Space's success will rely heavily in the execution. My passion to create, paired with my coding background is going to aid in the development of Spaces. Not to mention that I have personally experienced every subset of my potential market as a downtown commuter. I envision something heavily driven by data but presented beautifully.

message

Currently there is little to no communication between parking officials and the community they serve. I foresee this being an opportunity for more open communication between providers and the people. I hope to see more parking providers get on board and promote the use of Space inside their lots. There is potential for this app to grow in other ways as well. We could eventually accept payment within the app, offer "happy hour" discounts during less-trafficked times, provide real-time data on available spaces, etc.

distribution and revenue

When I was asked to join the Co.Starters program, I realized I could turn something I originally labeled as a pet project into a thriving and evolving source of revenue. Yes, it will be free to anyone via a web application. But I see potential in selling user data to local parking providers and ad space to any local companies. Ultimately, Space adds perspective value to our city with locals, as well as visitors.

closing

I want to thank Co.Lab for inviting us to be a part of this pilot program. These workshops were pulled me out of my comfort zone, and taught me business skills I otherwise would not have. I want to say a huge thank you to our wonderful mentors, Ashlee and Marcus. And lastly, I want to thank you all for being here to support young, eager minds like myself. I am truly humbled by the dedication and enthusiasm in Chattanooga's startup community. So, thank you.