

# Competitor Heuristics and SWOT Analysis

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### Analysis Summary

#### Overall

Across the three applications and the heuristic and SWOT analysis, there were some similarities, but also some opportunities to take on these applications. There are main points of focus for the development of this application. First is the reviews. Second, we will focus on what has appeared to be a major weakness and opportunity which are sites, historic sites, cultural events, etc. This is the result of the main focus of these three apps being mainly for restaurants, bars, and social businesses. The third area of focus that is an area of opportunity for this application and a weakness for the three analyzed is how search results appear, found, mapped, and sorted. Through these three areas of weakness and opportunity, this new application should be able to provide customers with something they need and will use.

#### Reviews:

The main strength across the three is their large user base and amount of reviews, pictures, and user-supplied content. This can also be a weakness. Through the interviews, research, and experiences these reviews cannot always be fully trusted. YouTube.com changed the rating system from a five-star rating system to a thumbs up or thumbs down as noted in [this blog post](#). Companies like Netflix and others have followed suit. These companies have ranking systems which do help add some legitimacy to the reviews when compared to a 1-star review complaining about how bad it was.

#### Great Places and Events

Across these three applications, there is the main focus on restaurants, bars, and social businesses. This leaves a large blind spot that includes things like art walks, live music or movie events in a park, historical sites, and other notable sites within a city. When visiting a new city people do not just eat and drink they have time for other activities as they explore. Some sites have things like parks or art features in a town, but as my survey discovered people are trying to dig through search results for this. Random searching was the top way that people found what they were looking for. This also brings up the issue of missing out on something important. This is a great opportunity for this application to exploit.

## Tailored Results and Profile

Through the survey and other research one area of trouble and opportunity is the search methodology. First, the user must search for what they think they want like “restaurant”. Then it may be refined to a specific type of restaurant like “fast food” or “Thai restaurant”. Then there is some digging through the results and looking at the location. Through the survey, one area that users do not like is the map. The map starts large and one must zoom in to see results or find results within the distance desired. There was one respondent who was dealing with a food allergy which is an important topic. These findings show a great opportunity to have personalized and localized results. One option would be to have a profile that can help refine likes and dislikes along with food allergies. If someone dislikes or is allergic to seafood, why should a sushi restaurant be in the results? The second area of opportunity would be the distance in which results are shown and matched. One possible solution will be to start close in and have to work out. The results shown will also be the best matches based on what is local and relevant to the user.

## The Analysis

### Foursquare

Heuristics Analysis	
Match between system and the real world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good connection, easy to understand</li><li>• Things could be spread out or across town</li></ul>
User control and freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The app is built in a way that prevents needing an emergency exit.</li><li>• It is narrow in scope to businesses</li><li>• There are some parks and other places, but these are not easily found</li></ul>
Recognition rather than recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is good at remembering the filters and it keeps the narrowed down results</li></ul>
Flexibility and efficiency of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The app is geared towards businesses like restaurants and bars. It's not very good for other things like parks, art walks, events, historical site</li></ul>

Aesthetic and minimalist design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not overwhelming with information. It's simple yet easy to use</li> </ul>
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FourSquare SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large user base</li> <li>• Lots of reviews and user input</li> <li>• Alerts and recommendations</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main focus is on restaurants, bars, and other social businesses</li> <li>• Alerts are not personalized</li> <li>• Other locations are hard to find or not shown</li> <li>• Not highly used in some places</li> <li>• Reviews are not always trusted</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better personalized profiles with likes, dislikes, and favorites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ There is something but it doesn't help in the search or recommendations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Include more places and things to do. Like major landmarks or events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “ there is a music festival near you tonight”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users using multiple sites Yelp, Google, etc. Who gets the attention?</li> <li>• Yelp, Google, Open Table, and others asking for ad revenue</li> </ul>

## Yelp

Heuristics Analysis	
Match between system and the real world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to understand the language and terms</li> <li>• The menus can often be incorrect</li> <li>• The mapping can show over a large area and zooming can help narrow what is near</li> </ul>
User control and freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is mainly focused on restaurants which is a big constraint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ There are some non-restaurant places, but they are not easy to locate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It keeps you within the guide rails</li> <li>• The emergency exit could lead to starting over</li> </ul>
Recognition rather than recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site does keep the filters and main objectives in mind as one digs. But these can be lost</li> </ul>
Aesthetic and minimalist design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design is very simple and easy to understand and navigate</li> <li>• In the survey, some noted that Yelp is hard for them to understand and clutter</li> </ul>

Yelp SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well known with lots of contributors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Yelp Elite who contribute the most</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Established ways for businesses to brag about the status on Yelp such as stickers</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No personalization to help in searching</li> <li>• No Alerts</li> <li>• There is a Hot New Business accelerator but it's something you must know where it is and how to find it.</li> <li>• Mainly geared towards businesses There isn't much for landmarks, historical sites, events</li> <li>• The reviews and star ratings can sometimes be dismissed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ There are hidden reviews for better or worse</li> <li>◦ There is Elite status, but these sometimes feel bought</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alerts</li> <li>• The personalized profile that aids in searching or recommendations</li> <li>• Find a way for rankings to be more realistic and trusted</li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users using multiple sites Foursquare, Google, etc. Who gets the attention?</li> <li>• Foursquare, Google, Open Table, and others asking for ad revenue</li> </ul>

## Google Maps

Heuristics Analysis	
Match between system and the real world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This can be a major strength due to street view and real-world mapping</li><li>• There are symbols for main sites</li></ul>
User control and freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are ways to pin and save favorite spots which is a nice feature</li><li>• Going back to the map can be simple depending upon how far one follows links. Someone could end up in their browser looking at a menu they had to download as a PDF</li><li>• There is little to no personlization</li></ul>
Recognition rather than recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are ways to pin and save favorite spots which is a nice feature</li><li>• Going back to the map can be simple depending upon how far one follows links. Someone could end up in their browser looking at a menu they had to download as a PDF</li></ul>
Aesthetic and minimalist design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The design is great and simple from the start. It can get more complicated and detailed as one dives deeper</li></ul>

Google Maps SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Well known</li><li>• On almost every phone</li><li>• Large user base with lots of reviews and tagging</li><li>• New explore feature with events like live music and cultural events</li></ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More geared towards selling ad space</li><li>• Doesn't help filter or narrow down searches</li><li>• There is a tendency for angry people to use 1-star reviews on this site which does skew the results.</li><li>• Users must zoom in to see all results or refine the search</li></ul>

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalization</li> <li>• Targets notifications, not just random alerts that get ignored</li> <li>• Less focus on the high paying chain restaurants or big-name restaurants</li> <li>• Find a way to counteract or modernize the way areas are rated.</li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of trust of reviews and results</li> </ul>