CatWalk Business Proposal

Catwalk, the ‘Google Maps’ for the University of Arizona, is a mobile web mapping service application. It offers satellite imagery, street maps and street view perspectives just like Google maps; however, it also contains additional features specific to the members and activities associated with the University of Arizona. It helps students by setting alarms according to the time taken to get ready, their walking speed and provides them directions to their classrooms through the shortest route possible.

Catwalk ignores the ‘imaginary force field’ that Google Maps thinks there is around the campus and provides the shortest route from point A to point B around the University. The app, if embedded in the currently present ‘Arizona Mobile’ app would use an algorithm (usually JavaScript) similar to the one Google Maps uses to provide high-resolution aerial or satellite imagery for all the buildings, restaurants, events and other venues through all available sidewalks and walkways on the University’s campus.

The following features that this app provides makes it a highly-effective tool in daily life:
- Alarm: Catwalk can be highly effective for students as they can feed in their class schedule and have the alarm wake them up accordingly. Based on the time the student takes to get ready, the alarm will go off automatically preventing students from losing valuable instructional time.

- Shortest Route with Speed calculation: The app offers directions for the shortest route possible. This includes all available sidewalks, walkways and grass-areas around campus. It also calculates the walking speed of the user and changes the arrival time accordingly. This feature can prevent anyone on campus from wasting time and can increase efficiency.

- Identification with names: Another major feature that the app has to offer is that it would identify all buildings, restaurants, walkways and venues with campus given names. The app returns directions with entering the Building names instead of the address of the location. This saves energy and time because a lot of students and visitors are not always aware of the street addresses of their venues. For example, Google Maps would provide accurate directions to the Eller College when indicated its address: 1130 East Helen Street, Tucson, AZ. However, Catwalk would provide perfect results if the user simply indicates ‘Eller College’.

- Building Map with Room numbers: Catwalk also benefits a wide range of customers by including building maps with room numbers. The vast building structures around campus can be seen as complicated by many people visiting the campus. Maps of the buildings
with room numbers can prove very useful to students of all ages, visitors, faculty, alumni, workers and parents.

In order to actually implement CatWalk at the University of Arizona, the app, just as anything else, would have to benefit not only the University itself, but it would also have to benefit us students too. CatWalk will, in fact, majorly benefit both the students at the University and the University itself. The way it will benefit the student body is two fold. First, it would reduce the amount of anxiety and pressure of the first couple weeks of school by allowing students to quickly, efficiently, and accurately learn the location of every one of their classes. This ease in class location will reduce the stress and anxiety of the student for the first couple weeks by getting one more thing off of their plate, so that there is not as much to focus on all at once. The second way in which CatWalk will benefit the student body is that it will help them get to class on time without having to speed walk, or even run. This will not only help their GPA because they are attending more classes, but it will also potentially afford students the ability to walk and talk with friends on the way to class and really dive deeper into the social aspect of college, which is something students do not do if they are running late to class. Now, we are definitely not saying that the social aspect of college is more important than the education aspect. But, what we are saying is that students tend to be rushed, stressed, and full of anxiety during the week, and being late to class is a major contributor. We would even go as far as saying that CatWalk, implemented in tandem with other various apps and activities, could substantially
lower the number of consumers of alcohol that are underage, since underage binge drinking on the weekends is often directly correlated with immense amounts of stress during the week.

Even though CatWalk will benefit the University slightly differently than how it will benefit us students, the benefits are still immense. The first way in which CatWalk will benefit the University is by increasing the attendance rate. This will help the University because the more students attend class, the more likely they are to learn, and the more likely to actually finish their undergraduate degree, and potentially continue on, which would bring in a lot more revenue to the school and would increase the overall college experience for everyone involved. The second way in which CatWalk will benefit the University is by increasing the pleasure of the University experience for adults, who not only spend a lot of money to send their kids to school at the University, but who would also be potential large, or even massive, donors to the University. The third way in which CatWalk will benefit the University is probably the most unusual, but it very well could be the most important. This benefit consists of the fact that the University of Arizona will be home to the headquarters of CatWalk, which will be spread all across the country. Being able to say that an app as famous as CatWalk was originated on the very grounds of the University would be a huge selling point to not only prospective students, but also to potential investors and donors looking to invest in the future. And the best way for them to do that is invest in CatWalk and invest in the University of Arizona, the greatest college in the world. These reasons, and many more, are the ways in which the University of Arizona
specifically will benefit from CatWalk. But, the target audience is so much more than only the University of Arizona.

The primary targeted audience for this new app would be University of Arizona students who already struggle getting to class on time. The obvious target for this new app would be incoming freshmen or transfers—new students—who are unfamiliar to the campus and therefore do not know the shortest pathways available to their new classes. These students would be the most confused with how the campus works and would use the app the most.

These students need to learn how to get accustomed to a regular schedule, and CatWalk can make that happen with its regular alarms based on the student’s unique schedule. The student will be forced to learn responsibility by scheduling how early they want to arrive and adjusting this based on the bike and pedestrian traffic that day.

However, at the beginning of each semester, everyone starts new with a brand new schedule, with unfamiliar classes. Returning students may also make use of the CatWalk app at the beginning of each semester when they have their new classes, trying to find the shortest possible path available. Returning students may also use CatWalk daily if just to check traffic on pathways, because this is a feature that the mobile app does not have currently available for students.

Granted, after two months or so, these new students will grow accustomed to their schedule and will have these shortest pathways ingrained in their minds, thus having less of a use for the
CatWalk app. But they may still need the alarms to wake them up each morning, or the traffic updates to see how long of a walk it will actually be.

But the CatWalk app does not just appeal to new students. It also appeals to all new visitors coming to the University of Arizona for the first time. This includes possible new incoming freshman, new recruits who are seeing campus and judging it for the first time. I know that when I was touring campus, I got lost trying to find my tour for Arbol de la Vida and was late to my tour. And again at Orientation, walking back to my dorm for the first time, it took thirty minutes to find my dorm (and it was raining), all because I was from out-of-state and terribly unfamiliar with the campus set-up.

It also appeals to family members who are travelling to visit their students (or other visitors in general), who don’t come to the University of Arizona as much and therefore do not know the campus as well. They may be looking to know how to get to their son or daughter’s dorm in the quickest way possible, or the Union to get some food, find the Campus Health Center if there is some medical emergency, or perhaps find the McKale Center or football stadium if they want to join their students in a sporting event. Tens of thousands of people are drawn to the University of Arizona for football games and basketball games; imagine if they were using CatWalk to find their way to their respective stadiums.

After the initial launch with the University of Arizona, we would be interested in launching the CatWalk app with other colleges and universities, expanding our consumer-base nationwide and perhaps even worldwide if our university base went international. Such an
expansion would be huge for CatWalk; imagine an app that started with the University of Arizona becoming a common use at nearly every major university. Every new student tends to get lost on a new campus. It doesn’t matter what school it is because the same basic problem applies.

The most obvious consumer base for CatWalk would be for new and incoming students, but it has a use for all students each semester when they have a new schedule. The consumer base can be expanded to visitors coming to the University of Arizona who do not know the campus as well and would therefore need to refer to an app like this more often. Also, we could expand CatWalk to other colleges and have a nationwide, or even worldwide consumer base with national and international universities, because the same basic problem applies to every major university.

The responsible party for putting CatWalk into motion would primarily be the University Information Technology Services, or UITS, as they currently run the existing Arizona Mobile application. We, the creators of CatWalk, would also play a significant role within the development of the app. Because we do not have experience in creating and designing applications, the more technical details would be handled by those who are more apt to the task. However, we as a team would likely play a role in the instrumentation and direction of the project. In addition, we may be given instruction and training in how to handle technical details of the project, such as designing the user interface or creating the algorithm that allows the application to find the shortest path between two points on campus.
Without making assumptions on the specifics involved, as our area of study is business rather than computer science, the following tasks would be involved in the process: integration within the existing application, designating all sidewalks and areas that can be traversed on foot, creating a system similar to Google or Apple maps that finds the shortest route between two points with our specific to campus maps, creating a data bank to store the routes and times for traffic updates, and a formula that calculates time based on designated walking speed and traffic. Other tasks that we are not currently aware of may also be involved.

Even with this cursory estimate, it is quite clear that the task is daunting, as a significant amount of menial labor and perhaps clerical work will be involved. An organization such as UITS has a considerable amount to do already, so we, as outsiders to the world of application software development, would take on the majority of the tasks that are not too technologically intensive. We would be responsible for walking campus and finding the walkable routes and paths that do not necessarily show up on a larger scale map, as well as any data entry required to facilitate the creation. Coding and other aspects of a similar nature will be handled by the professionals, unless we are given extremely explicit instructions and training.

In terms of marketing or distribution, the beauty of CatWalk is that a good portion of students and visitors to the university either already have the Arizona Mobile application or are aware of it and its features. Catwalk would be featured in an update for those that already have the app, and added to the list of features that people are given to encourage downloading the app. All of the necessary pieces put in place for the Arizona Mobile app can quite easily be applied to promote CatWalk as the two are one and the same.
In short, the development and design of CatWalk will be a joint effort, between us as the CatWalk team and UITS, who is responsible for the current University of Arizona mobile app and the rest of the technology at the University. Without knowing the specifics, we know it will be a labor intensive task, and if we are willing to put the work in and cooperate with both each other and UITS, then we can turn this idea into reality.