Classify- an Integrative University Social Media Application

Classify is our idea for an educational social media app that would be very beneficial for college students. It would be student run but facilitated through the University. This is an application that allows a student to connect with their classmates easily. Under the current system, a student would have to look through a class email list in order to contact classmates. What makes it worse is that this is seen by the current generation of students as a very awkward means of communication. This is due to the fact that there is very rarely a response from anyone after an email is sent to the class. In most cases, this is due to a fear of being judged by others, which is human nature. But, Classify provides an anonymous feed. Also, a social media feed is something very comfortable for students, making this form of communication preferred by most at the University of Arizona. Students can communicate with other classmates in order to get help with homework questions without having this fear. Also, Classify can assist in the planning of study groups for students. This would be particularly beneficial for students taking online classes. There is no opportunity for students in online classes to interact with other classmates, but Classify could change this. They could talk to one another through a social media feed and even set up in person meetings to help improve their learning experience. But, Classify also has other helpful features. One of these is a class rating
system, where students can let other students know what their experiences in certain classes were like. This would be very beneficial for students when registering for classes, especially those younger students like us. Even though there is already Rate My Professor, students do not always have all the information they need. This is due to the fact that Rate My Professor is a national system and some professors have no reviews or very few. But Classify is location based, meaning that it would be specific for the University of Arizona. This would allow for every professor to have a large number of reviews, meaning that they would be much more accurate. When there are not many reviews, the results can be skewed significantly by a few students. The last feature of Classify is class notifications. These would notify the student when upcoming assignments will be due such as homework questions and essays. In addition, students are notified when upcoming tests will take place. This is something that would be very helpful to students, since many professors do not clearly post due dates of assignments. However, Classify is most helpful to students because it combines all these features into a single app. Also, an application is much easier and quicker for students to access compared to online websites. Classify also allows students to feel more connected with others in their university. As first year freshmen, we did not know almost anyone in our classes but Classify could have helped with this. It would have allowed us to get to know more classmates, as well as be able to have even more success in our classes. We had also ran into the trouble of not knowing exactly when some assignments were due in our classes, which the notifications from Classify would help solve. Overall, Classify would just make any college student’s life much easier by having all the necessary educational tools in one place. Classify is an application that has the possibility to not just improve the University of Arizona’s campus, but college campuses
all over the country. Classify gives students the opportunity to connect with other students through a social media platform that fosters discussion about class related topics. As freshmen at the University of Arizona, finding help with homework, asking about missed classes, or even just finding people to study with was often difficult in large lecture classes, which are very common in an institution of this size. Students are constantly trying to stay connected in their classes through other social media networks such as Facebook, YikYak, Twitter, etc… however these networks don’t offer large-scale and reliable information that a potential application like Classify would create.

B) What is the value proposition?

The first main aspect of Classify’s value proposition is the effective medium of communication. Classify offers users the ability to customize their own feed by selecting classes that they are enrolled in and creating a filter for what they want to see. Users would be able to choose specific classes and see posts only from other students who selected the same class. This would create an entirely new network of communication at the University of Arizona, and potentially at campuses all over. By creating a campus-wide, online community solely for academic and class-related conversation, valuable ideas and thoughts could be shared throughout the entire campus. If students were able to use this social media app as a quick and easy way to not miss deadlines and homework assignments, success rates among students, especially first year students, could potentially increase greatly. This would be especially effective for online classes at the U of A. In online classes and labs, there is no in-person interaction between classmates and it is often awkward and difficult to try to reach out and
communicate to other students that are taking the class. With Classify, every online class could have its own student social media feed, or “group chat” if you will.

The campus-specific nature of an application like Classify is a very unique aspect that creates a virtual community. The highly popular campus-based social media app YikYak has proven that by creating a social media community that is location based, it can unify an entire University and create light-speed, instantaneous method of communication. Professors do their best to make sure students know what they need to get done, but so many students never hear or see these notifications whether its due to skipping class, not checking email, or just plain ignorance. However, students are always looking at their phones, hoping to entertain themselves with the never-ending stream of information that social media has to offer. By creating a social media app that would give students this type convenience, students would be able to ask about what is due, what they missed, or just to seek help in the class in general at the tip of their fingertips. This content on this app would be monitored but it would be completely student run, which would create an organic communication network. At a university the size of the U of A, this type of social network would give students so many more academic opportunities.

In addition being a campus wide social community, Classify would operate as an anonymous network. An issue that we often saw in other methods of class communication such as Facebook groups or email lists is that the timid nature of most people when it comes to asking for help. Many people are afraid of judgment or may feel like nobody will reply to them if they don’t personally know them. With an anonymous feed however, everyone can feel comfortable with talking about a class or asking for help without feeling like they will be judged
for asking a stupid question. In addition, the anonymity creates equality on a network like this. Rather than seeing other people’s name, gender, race, you would only see what an individual has to share through written communication. This would allow university students to communicate, set up study groups, and share ideas in a way in an uninhibited, campus-wide and online environment.

C) Who would this benefit?

The Classify app would be created by, run by, and made for students. The purpose of the app is to take away the awkwardness that new students face coming into a different class and allow them to connect to their peers in a way never possible before. However, teachers have the potential to benefit as well with an additional and more accessible way to connect to their students. Overall, this app can revolutionize college education for both the students and the professors.

The first and primary party that will benefit from this app are the students whom can gain an enhanced method of communication and class organization. Classify gives each individual student a connection to every other student in the class, allowing them the opportunity to create study groups, ask questions, find out about upcoming assignments and tests, and make a whole new classroom experience. Many students feel judged in the current method of creating Facebook groups that have their names attached to the posts. In Classify, the posts are completely anonymous, meaning that students will not feel judged if they have a question every day, if they feel their question is simple, or if they do not understand a simple concept from the class. With this app, students will no longer be judged based on perceived
peer pressure and can still find the answers to their questions, opening up more and more possibilities for success in the class with greater sharing of knowledge. Students can also benefit by using the app’s calendar and reminder features. For many students, it is increasingly difficult to keep track of their schedules and what is due for which class, especially in cases where the teacher is not always helpful in responding to emails or posting reminders online. This app allows the students to set reminders in an app that they will be checking much more frequently than they would D2L or other websites. By streamlining the process for remembering assignments, students can stress less and be better prepared for exams. The third feature that students at all class levels can benefit from is the class rating feature available on Classify. Instead of using national websites and services such as Ratemyprofessor.com where few realistic ratings exist for classes and professors at a particular university, Classify is college specific and accessed by students on a daily basis. This takes away from the “extremes” that tend to dominate other sites because those are the only students who will take the time to go to the site and leave a rating. Also, it gives much better feedback about more classes because there will be more ratings for more classes, painting a better, more realistic picture of each class.

Despite the main purpose of the app being to help students, Classify also has the potential to benefit educators as well. While not a current part of the application, the idea of allowing teacher accessibility has been considered for future expansion and updates of the app. If teachers were allowed to access their class, they would not be able to see what students were posting about their class, but could post reminders for their assignments, updates to information given in class, and study guides for upcoming tests. By keeping the professors out
of the criticism section of the app but giving them access to give information to the students, it keeps the system free and trustworthy for the students while also providing an effect and direct method for teachers to reach their students. Due to emails becoming lost in the constant stream of daily messages in the majority of student inboxes, opening up a message system in Classify offers a perfect fix to this communication problem.

D. Who is responsible for making this happen?

Our group came up with the idea of having an app that would allow you to have a feed of all the people in your classes that would be anonymous. This would allow you to view class ratings, assignments, notifications and plan study groups. Also, this App would allow you to have everything in one place with easy accessibility of having it on your phone as an app. As a freshman this year our group decided to brainstorm to see what we would have liked entering school this year. What we come up with was that finding details about your class through the many different websites we had to go through to find answers that didn’t really help needed a change. Thus, we came up with the app Classify. After discussing with our group, we decided that the best decision for our company would be to start it right here at U of A with Eller backing us up as our responsible organization for Classify. We chose U of A to start up because of a few main reasons. One would be that knowing the different members and rank of our business program, our company feels very strongly that we could be very successful with Eller at our backs. Classify would be able to have a fresh start with a huge campus of about 30,000 students being able to be our test subjects for the new app and to see whether or not this app could possibly be branched out to other major colleges. Also, since the main use of this app would be in schools, it would be logical to initiate the production of this app at a school. This
way, it can be tested in a school setting and bugs could be discovered and fixed before the app is released to a mass market. This process has been proven effective, even at the U of A. The class organization system “NoteBowl” was developed and tested at the U of A, by U of A students. The use of this system here has allowed the developers to analyze the use of it. Classify would be tested in the same manner, which will allow it to be the best product possible when it is released. By partnering with Eller, we will have students and classes to test the use of the app and report and problems with the app before it is fully developed and released for use at other schools. Overall, Eller would be the best backer for the Classify app because it provides the perfect environment for the development of the app. The business background of Eller makes it the perfect place to develop marketing techniques to popularize the app. Also, since Eller consists of many students and classes, both of which would be the primary users of the app, it provides the best location for which the app can be tested in early stages. The first testers would be able to locate and report bugs, so that these problems can be fixed and the app overall can be improved before it is released for normal use. With all of these resources, the app would be the best final product when it is completed.