SociaLive

Project Portfolio Report

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Final Interface

We created a web-based prototype of the system to run on an iPhone. The website for viewing the final interface prototype iteration is located at http://nathanward.com/info345/v5.

Executive Summary

SociaLive is a mobile application for the iPhone that facilitates socializing amongst friends in the real world. SociaLive's core functionality provides real-time information about friends, events, and locations and has a proficiency in helping people find great places to hang out and connect with friends. One can use it to see the locations of friends and live statistics of venues in the area to make informed decisions about where to go without the unnecessary trek to the location itself. By providing features such as a live local map showing who's where and what's hot in the area, social networking functionality, and venue information like ratings, popularity, live comments, and other metrics, SociaLive is perfectly suited for the spontaneous and dynamic social scenes of life.

SociaLive is targeted mostly at people in their late teens and twenties, especially college students and Facebook users. SociaLive helps solve two distinct, but related social problems: keeping tabs on one's friends for the sake of more easily meeting up with them, and finding out where the best places are to hang out. All the content is created and maintained by users, from events and invitations to ratings and contacts. This is both a boon and a necessity - a system with even a fraction of the breadth of ours would be expensive and difficult to maintain through professional ratings, but leveraging users provides for free and representative ratings as things change in real time.
From a practical perspective, our system is both interesting and useful. The combination of social behavior with live information and ratings (hence the name SociaLive) results in a powerful technology which can streamline the spontaneous activity of hanging out. The simplicity of the system and amount of information it presents to users opens up new social opportunities by making it easy to see who is where and what is now. At the same time, we use privacy settings to keep sensitive personal information, such as location and status, only in the hands of trusted friends; SociaLive is about finding comfortable social situations, not aiding stalkers.

We designed SociaLive through the collective experience of ourselves and our friends, and by observing other social networking tools. Although the cardinal sin of any design is to be one which is made to appeal to its designers, in our case, the users and designers were not distinct groups, and both the positive and negative social experiences our group members had were able to help design iterations. Still, we often found ourselves looking at current systems, such as Facebook, to see how others viewed tools which assist social activities. Terminology between SociaLive and Facebook was synchronized at times, and derived user mental models were borrowed to consider how people would look at SociaLive.

**System Description**

There are a large number of functions in SociaLive, all aimed at connecting friends and facilitating gatherings. The function users will probably use the most is the status message, which works similar to an AIM away message or a Facebook status message; it lets other users know what their friend is up to. Usually people will want to put where they are, who they are with or what they are doing, for example, "At Bar X with Tom and Jim, come hang out" or "Studying, do not disturb". This allows friends to see if a user is free or busy, and can potentially notify them when their status is changed. Users can also broadcast their location
along with their status message, using either GPS for more precise information, or opting on the side of privacy and only broadcasting a location if they are at an event such as a party or bar.

To see all of one's friends, a user views the Friends tab (on the bottom toolbar or home screen), which has a list of their friends. The list can be sorted alphabetically by name or by when their status was last updated, to allow for people to find particular friends, or to see who has recently become available or started doing something. Touching a friend's name will go to that friend's information screen, showing a picture (if provided), their current status and time since it was updated, and the options to call them, send a text message, or invite them to the user's current location. The Friends tab also has a Manage section which allows users to sort and place friends into different privacy categories ranging from full friends to blocked, and letting them sort pending friend requests similarly to Facebook or MySpace.

Another important function of the application is to allow users to view, create, attend, and invite people to events. An event can be anything from a party, game, gathering, musical performance, or just hanging out somewhere. Events and locations are listed together, their key difference being that events have a time and place, while locations – such as bars, clubs, and restaurants – tend to be fixed places where one can meet on many different occasions. The Events/Locations screen allows them to be sorted alphabetically, by distance from the current location, and by the time that the event starts/started (events which have finished will not appear, and locations which have closed will have their next time of opening taken to be the time they will start). The average rating, out of five stars, as well as how many SociaLive friends and users are at an event is also displayed here. Touching an event's listing will take the user to the event's page, displaying the same information and additional details such as the address, optional contact phone number, and freely entered details (such as drink specials, party themes, bands performing, etc). In this way, SociaLive can act as a sort of performance, food and party guide for any city, providing a wealth of useful information on the go. Additionally, users can use the rating function to rate, and view the average ratings of, specific attributes of an establishment (music quality, guy-to-girl ratio, drink prices, etc) and their overall impression of the event.
Users are also able to view friends who are presently at the event in question (and their ratings), invite other people to attend, or mark down "I'm Here" to formalize their presence and allow them to rate and show others that they are there.

The Events/Locations screen also has the abilities to Search events, performing queries against all event information (name, location, type, details, phone number, persons in attendance, etc) to help them find something of interest. Finally, there is a screen for creating events, which lets users enter a new event into the system. They specify a name, type and address, and optionally a phone number, time and details, and the event gets registered into SociaLive and is viewable by others in the area until it expires. An event creator can edit the details to or delete an event at any time after its creation.

For people who are more interested in seeing what is immediately nearby, the Maps screen provides a more rich visual experience. A map, initially centered around the user's current location (which is indicated) shows streets in a Google Maps-like manner, with events shown in their proper locations. Event indicators are color-coded by event type and have ratings and friend counts listed in each indicator. The full details for each event can be seen by tapping the event indicator, which takes the user to the event's screen.

After an event has been created or otherwise chosen for attendance, a user can invite friends with a streamlined Invitation page; they simply select friends from a scrollable list and optionally enter in an accompanying message and time, and send off the invitation. SociaLive has a whole system in place for announcing invitations and letting users pick what they want to attend.

Important to the whole application is privacy, as with any other social networking tool. There are many potential issues that could arise if the wrong people see real time information about your location and status. To that end, users can (and initially, have to) manage their friends into the categories of full, limited, and blocked friends. Full friends can see everything you're broadcasting, limited friends can see your status but
not your location, and blocked friends can't see any of your information. Users can also opt to change an individual friend's privacy setting on that friend's screen.

All of the features and interface elements were made with the iPhone in mind. The look, feel and function of the application will be familiar to regular iPhone users. It employs common idioms and metaphors when appropriate, such as the home screen, and also uses iPhone-specific idioms (such as the navigational bar, scrolling method, and keyboard) at other times – as such, some elements won't be immediately obvious to someone who has never used an iPhone. By in large, though, it is presented in a user-friendly, non-cluttered and intuitive way.

The feature set is intended for "Generation Y" users who are used to and comfortable with using technology to supplement most aspects of their lives. For anyone who has friends and free time, whether in a big city or smaller town, SociaLive can be useful and practical for generating new social opportunities. As long as users are willing to use the technology and connect with people, our system is right for people with good friends and looking for a good time.

**Evolution**

Our project began as an idea, originally based on the desire to know more about social events before going out. The concept of knowing what it’s like at different locations and events was appealing. In Nathan’s social application practicum, dubbed PartyTracker, this core idea of event information was supplemented with social networking for two reasons. Firstly, the deciding factor in destination decisions is usually the locations of friends. Secondly, it was thought that large social networks would have the capability for user-driven event creation and rating. When brought to the group, we found many similarities in other group members’ social application practicums. In particular, Ian had another on-the-go social application, dubbed
FriendFinder, that helped friends meet up on the spur of the moment. These concepts led to SociaLive, which combines an event finding and rating system with functionality for finding and meeting up with friends to create a cohesive, real-time, location-aware system that excels at aiding people in their social outings.

Our project evolved through early sketches, an initial version prototyped on a whiteboard, an early high-fidelity version and iterations based largely on heuristic evaluations, user testing and feedback. There were a number of issues that we spent a great deal of time discussing, rethinking, testing, and redesigning. Many things changed in the process, which can be seen in the design iterations (V1, V2, V3/4, V5) and are discussed to some extent below. (Note: Archives of previous work are located at https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/cominfo345/Mint+Condition and http://nathanjward.com/info345/.)

Home

The home screen represents the different areas of the application. See below for snapshots of how it evolved through various design iterations.
When we first came up with the Home page for the SociaLive, it looked like some more information could be put there that wouldn’t clutter up the interface. As seen in V1 above, we included current status and pending requests/invitations to the bottom of the home screen. Later, we decided to add little help text or descriptions at the bottom of each section link to help a new user adjust to using the interface or give quick information to the experienced user at a glance. Then we decided to merge the notifications with the help text for their respective sections. If there are no notifications, there will be grey help text, but we decided to change the text of updates/notifications to blue for clarity. Thus, we both help new users of the application, and give experienced users highly relevant information all in one place.
Events

The “I’m Here” feature was one very important step in our development of the mental model of system and user state. It has a number of benefits in tracking your current location, letting your friends know where you are, notifying you of friends entering the same event, and is reflected in various parts of the application. See below for samples of how the event screen evolved. The V2 screens show that a user could only see the “I’m here” button after first clicking “Add to My Events,” but we decided it was a bad idea to require this extra step and a user should be able to immediately indicate that he or she is at the event. (Note that this action will still add it to “My Events” in that while at the event “Current Event” will link to this page and after leaving it will show up in Recent Events.)
One can see from the above screenshots that the V3-V5 iterations changed the organization and visual display of the events screen. It was a mistake was to try to put too much information in the event page. While it’s important to provide as much visibility as possible, it ended up being a bad idea to try to include the entire event description for instance on this page; there simply isn’t enough room for everything on a mobile device. The main decision was to put almost everything into grouped cells that the user could click for more information. This both allowed us to provide a snapshot of the further information the user could receive and group together related sections. The name/type/distance was placed in the top cell with phone and address links turned into buttons to give them a better clickable affordance, ratings/details/friends/invite cells were placed in the middle, and we moved the “Add to My Events” and “I’m Here” buttons to the bottom. This last choice made sense to us because the users may look at the event information before deciding to go there and the information all fit on one page, so the user would never have to scroll down to see those buttons.

The "My events" section didn't even exist in our original version, but stemmed out of what used to just be a "Current Event" shortcut. Although full desktop apps can group all event-related information together, we
wanted to break events up into a main events section and a separate space for pending event invitations, upcoming events, your current event still, and a list of recently attended events.

Event invitation also went through significant evolution. Initially we didn't have a good way to ask your friends to attend an event. We concluded, however, that this was an important feature, bridging the events and friends parts of the application. We essentially expanded this functionality to invite friends and actually decided to include a prompt for this after event creation due to user feedback. We additionally added a feature to invite a friend to your current location from an individual friends page, essentially a handy shortcut where it makes sense. Another aspect of event invitations that we had trouble with was how to handle events that you have been invited to. Specifically, we discussed the issue of how to handle RSVPs and if we should even include them. We decided to include this functionality, and used the existing “Add to my events” button on an event page to RSVP. By indicating that you will be going to the event by clicking this button, the system stores this as an upcoming event that you can see in the My Events section of the application.

We also struggled with what the “invitation” should entail. One member wanted to allow users to give invitations their own name, description, timeframe, etc. However, we worried that would unnecessarily turn invitations into their own sub-events within the system. Perhaps this is one issue brought on by the fact that we had decided to allow users to create both persistent events (i.e. locations, without a specific time-frame) and regular events with time-frames. Nevertheless, we decided that our users would want to easily invite friends to events without the need to send mass text messages (which is a behavior we are trying to replace with this application), so we included invitations with the ability to set a message and time to meet at the location. The receiver of the invitation sees the customized invitation in their My Events area, but they are still taken to the main event in the system when clicking on the invitation; thus, RSVPs are handled like non-invited events.
The original intention of our system was to allow different people to share opinions and ratings about events. We incorporated this with a star rating system (out of 5 stars) and optional comments. The concept was that more users would be tempted to rate if it was a very quick process but for people who wanted to give more information in their ratings, they could also leave comments. From this idea of a ratings system, we thought it would be more helpful to add extra attributes that could be rated which would give more information and also help the user make decisions on where they wanted to go next. We realized that everyone has a different rating system and that the criteria for a high number of stars might differ greatly depending on the individual. Therefore, we added attributes that the user could rate using a slider (much quicker than thinking up a numerical rating) such as loudness, drink prices, gender mix, etc. so that people looking for certain aspects in an event would have an easier time finding one. We decided to remove the comments section to reduce scope and because we decided that users may not really use the feature and its inclusion could discourage them in terms of the time it could take to rate/comment on events. One small step to prevent misuse was to only let users at the event submit any ratings. Users that aren’t at event are only able to view ratings.

**Friends**

One of the main aspects of the application is the social networking capability. See below for snapshots of how friend listings evolved. You can see here how we use attached buttons to represent sorting options of the same data. These screenshots also reveal that we removed the Map shortcut link (from Friends as well as Events) to focus on it as it’s own section. We also removed the search feature because iPhone users can quickly tap the letter on the right-hand side corresponding to users names. Additionally, “Add” was replaced with “Manage.”
Individual friend pages also changed in the Friends section. The following depicts some changes that the Friend page underwent. As the various iterations reflect, some of the changes were cosmetic, some were placement modifications to better organize and indicate important information, and some were new features like the shortcut to invite the user to your location (V4) and to the shortcut to the page for the user’s current location (V5).
Privacy settings for friends went through a number of changes, namely in the design of the Manage Friends page, where you can now easily accept people as full friends or move them around to different privacy levels. We decided on three main privacy levels: full friends (that have full access to the user’s location and status), restricted friends (that can see the user’s profile but not location), and blocked users (that can’t see the user at all). Our current design implementation assumes use of Apple’s Address Book framework for the iPhone to read and write contact data such that contacts in a user’s phone are automatically imported into the Manage Friends screen as Pending friends. A first-time user of SociaLive would likely want to utilize the Select All buttons instead of picking a setting for each individual one person at a time.

The manner in which Friend Requests were handled also changed over time. Originally we were thinking of a request system, like that in Facebook, but decided to do things a little differently. We thought that it was important for friends to be mutual but that once a user friend-requested someone, that user would have to first indicate the friend setting they were giving that person. Then the person that was requested would be able to see that setting in their Pending Requests so they could decide how much information they wanted to disclose in return. In order to prevent bad feelings, we also chose to prevent friends from seeing what the user had set an individual’s friend setting to (with the exception of Pending) so that users could block people without the other friend blatantly seeing it, among other issues.

**Other**

We were considering many methods of displaying information on the map. We wanted the user to be able to quickly see what was going on around them, such as which friends were nearby and what the ratings were of surrounding events. The final version uses a color scheme to indicate the type of event (restaurant, party, etc.) and has the stars displayed in a row beneath the color. The previous iteration had the rating stars curving
around the event circle but we learned from our user tests that it was more difficult to gauge the amount of stars present when they were circular so we made them into a traditional straight row. Additionally, the idea crossed our minds to change the size of the event circle depending on the ratings or how many friends were there but we decided that there might be too many variations present on the map at the same time and end up confusing the user instead. Therefore, we decided to keep the circle size consistent but added numbers inside to indicate the number of friends present.

The remaining area of the application is Status. This area only consists of one page, and thus didn’t undergo significant overhaul. However, we originally had no update and cancel buttons, which is the manner in which website like Facebook handle status; one need only type in the status and click elsewhere for it to be set. However, it was determined that such a method would confuse users in our mobile setting, so we added explicit buttons for updating and canceling this operation. Additionally, we originally had an option to set your availability, be decided to remove this option because it was not really integrated or very beneficial to the other aspects of our application. While a useful feature in general, we decided that it added unnecessary bulk in our case.

The current state of the application is the fifth iteration of design, one that includes a long process from product conception through design, interviews, surveys, cognitive walkthrough, heuristic evaluation, usability testing and a lot of discussion and redesign along the way. The final version hosted at nathanjward.com/info345/v5/ uses image maps on top of images to provide an interactive application prototype within a website.
V5 Changes

The V5 design iteration included a number of changes to improve the interface. One of these changes was in the friend arrival pop-up as shown to the right. If the friend arrival notification setting in Options is active, a pop-up like that shown to the right will be displayed when a friend clicks “I’m here” for the same event you’re at. We added an option right in this pop-up to go straight to that friend’s profile in case the user wants to call/text the friend, see his or her status, etc.

We had difficulty deciding what the interface for the Manage Friends screen should look like but after some back and forth, we decided to keep the green/yellow/red (full/restricted/blocked) color scheme, but introduced check marks in place of a button that looked like it was pressed down to help bridge the user’s gulf of evaluation by more clearly reflecting system state. This was inspired by some of our users that indicated the Manage Friends screen was too busy and seemed to have more buttons than were necessary.

And in keeping with our Select All feature, we put arrow buttons in the headers of each privacy setting instead of the standard square button to indicate (with the arrow pointing down) that pressing the button would have an effect on what was below it. We previously had smiley faces to indicate the friend setting but after using different faces, we decided it wasn’t needed since we already had the colors that indicated the setting as well as check marks in each category (in case the user was color blind).
We also changed the Friend page during the V5 design iteration. A number of things were modified on the individual Friend screen, mostly to improve organization, but also to support easier navigation. The Call and Text buttons were made larger for alignment and usability purposes and brought up next to the user’s photo, next to which the user’s phone number was also added. We made this change to increase the visibility of these important buttons and because this is the primary contact information for the friend that will remain static. The friend’s location was moved into a separate cell underneath the top cell in order to provide differentiation of content and to allow the user to click on the location to see more information about the event at which the friend is located. Also, in response to user testing, the exclamation mark on the “Invite!” button was replaced with an ellipsis for “Invite…” to indicate that this button takes you to the invitation page (so the user can invite more people) instead of immediately inviting the user. Lastly, friend privacy was updated to reflect the new checkmark icons (to be consistent with those in the Manage Friends screen) and text was added to ensure the user understood what the buttons do.

One problem we uncovered through user testing was the inability to rate an event without rating both the overall event as well as the event attributes. We wanted to allow the user to just rate the overall event, if there
are in a rush for instance, to encourage user contribution without demanding too much. To do this, used radio buttons with default N/A selected as you can see in the comparison screenshots below.

Another change made was the addition of event type in the event listings. Previous versions did not include this piece of information when viewing a list of events, but user testing indicated that this was an important way to differentiate events at that level. We originally opted for simplicity, but decided in this case that the information was important enough to go for visibility. We felt we were able to add this information without cluttering the screen.

We changed the “Home” button to an icon of a house (universally used and understood) instead of the previous text button. This was done for aesthetic and minimalist design, to minimize clutter at the top of each page, but also so that the user would be less distracted by reading text at the top. We felt that the use of this icon would help the user more quickly take action at a glance.
Another small change we made between V4 and V5 was to make the Back button just say “back” instead of the heading of the previous screen. From our user tests, many of our users were confused as to what the tab meant and there was much less confusion when the tab just said “back.” Originally we wanted it to be a dynamically changing button so the user could see where they were going back to but it ended up complicating matters so we decided to keep the commonly used convention of having a Back button.

We changed a number of other elements in the V5 iteration as well. Based on user testing, we made a change to the maps ratings layout to display stars in a row instead of in a circle due to feeling this would be easier to compare between events. There were a number of consistency issues that were fixed as well. Namely, fonts were all changed to Helvetica (mostly in the various Event pages for List, Search, Create, Rate, and Invite). For better alignment, we also changed size of stars on the Rate page and the size of the event type on the Create page. Alignment changes on Event Create page. We also made a few spacing changes for consistency as well, on the Event Create and various Friends section pages, and minor phrasing changes.

User Testing

Our first user test was with Tony. He could be considered a very social and even loud-mouthed type of person that enjoys going out to bars on a regular basis. A significant source of confusion for him was the invitation function. When tasked with inviting some friends to an event, he first tried to look friends up individually on a list and send an invitation to each of them. He was also mistakenly under the impression that the invite button instantly invited a friend, and on the resulting screen, you could pick another person whose page you would then view and invite them in turn. Additionally, after creating an event, he first went to the Friends screen to try and invite people as before, and then looked at Invitations under My Events. Although the former would work if you're at the party, the latter will not (Invitations is for Invitations you
have received) and we may have to reword it. A large issue in this session was that he simply did not see the "Invite Friends to Pixel" link in the list on the Event's page. This revealed to us that the user's model expects invitation to be the obvious action after creating an event. He also didn't understand the number in the circle for an event on the Maps section, next to the person icon, which indicates the number of friends at the event. This is possibly a combination of the icon not being used anywhere else, not being explained, and not being very good. Other users, however, understood this symbol, so we decided that he just wasn't previously familiar with the icon's meaning.

We also tested Nina, a very social international student from the city of Bangkok. She found it very easy to change her Status but was not sure she wanted to know where all of her friends were and preferred calling them up. Her reasoning was that if her friend was close, she would already know any issues instead of having to go and see what her friend's status was. Additionally, Nina did not see the "Invite Friends to Event" bar that our first user did not see either. She also thought that the Manage Friends screen looked very busy but understood how it worked. One thing we noticed was that she would rather select specific people from the Friends list and see their status or change their privacy setting instead of looking for which of her friends were closest to her from the Maps or editing friend options in bulk. She also did not like the idea of Restricted Friends because she thought that it would be a way to make enemies by denying someone "Full Friendship" but not actually blocking them. Overall, Nina would prefer to call her friends to find out information instead of being presented with all of it whenever she wanted to see it.

Another test subject was Anwar, a fairly social girl who goes out a lot in her hometown of New York City. She was very impressed by the ability to see where her friends could be hanging out but stated that our application would not work unless everyone was using it. When it came to finding an event she wanted to attend, she chose to click Events/Locations and pick the event that a lot of her friends were at. She then stated she would see which of her friends were there and then plan accordingly. Like Nina, we also noticed that instead of altering friend options in bulk, she would find them up individually. For instance, instead of
seeing who was nearest to her, she would find a particular person and see where they were. Anwar also stated that she liked the color coding of the Maps and how she could see how many friends were where. In the end, she said that she liked SociaLive a lot and would definitely use it.

Next we tested Mariana, a social person who tries to go out a lot when she doesn't have a lot of homework. She was a little bit confused with how Broadcast Location was on the status and in the Options (since the Options cannot be selected from the main navigation bar) but was able to figure it out. She differed from Anwar when selecting what event she wanted to attend by looking at the rating and first and not which of her friends were there first. She found it easy to create an event and invite friends to that event. We noticed that Mariana also preferred to alter friend options individually instead of doing it in bulk, which is possible from the Manage Friends screen. At the end of the test, she stated that our application was very convenient since it was on a cell phone and made it much easier to find out where to go instead of having to call many different people. The Maps also appealed to her because she liked seeing where other people were in relation to her. Overall, Mariana liked out application and stated she would use it.

Lastly, Young is a student who goes out occasionally but not a lot. For the most part he understood the application and his thoughts on what everything did were almost always right on target the first time. Notably, however, he thought that to create an event one would go to My Events. He reasoned that Events/Locations was like a formal listing while My Events was more of a personalized list. This is important because the same reaction was observed during our pilot test, and suggests that My Events is a more logical place to have event creation. He also wasn't entirely clear on how the friend selection system worked on the invitation screen, and he thought tapping a friend's name would go to their friend page. However, unlike in our pilot test, he approached invitations from the route of finding an event and then pushing the 'Invite friends to' button rather than finding friends one at a time from the Friends list and issuing personalized invitations. Thus it seems that both methods can be natural to different users, and they might in fact both be learned over time. However, making it more obvious that the miniature Friends list in the
Invitation screen is one for selection like a list of items by check boxes would help users to more easily understand how to use it. Adding actual check boxes into the list would make its unique function more obvious and quite possibly eliminate all confusion. Finally, he thought the wording in the Options "Notify me when" section should be changed, because "Notify me when Event Invitations" doesn't really make sense -- "Notify me when Invitations Received" would be better. Likewise, "Friend Requests" could be changed to something like "Friend Request Received" (although the size of the text would require something more concise).

**Future of the System**

Like most systems, ours isn't in its ideal state, and could benefit from further refinement. As always, features can be added, functions can be streamlined, and user testing can find more rough spots to smooth out. However, there are in particular several areas we know we could concentrate our effort, were we to keep working on SociaLive beyond this iteration.

First and foremost, we would like to better deal with ratings. Earlier designs and surveys hinted at this and interviews and user testing confirmed that for the user ratings in our event-finding sub-system to be used, they need to be trusted. We therefore have to work to reinforce the integrity of our ratings in the system. Potential exploits of the system include an establishment, such as a bar or restaurant, having employees rate favorably and skewing the statistics – or more likely, having a group of friends who helped set up a party all give 5-star ratings right when it starts to jump-start the event. We also have to consider that people might not rate an event because they're having too much fun to be bothered to take out their phone for a minute. We would perform further user testing to determine the efficacy of directly bringing the user to the ratings page directly after clicking the “I’m here” button. We might also address these issues by providing an "average
time spent here" statistic to give a voice to people who merely attended and did not rate, and by handling the ratings differently for friends of event creators versus strangers (so for example, if a friend of an party host gives a rating, it might be discarded or disallowed because it is likely biased).

We also should consider expanding the scope from being just for iPhones. Although the iPhone is a good example of the sorts of technologies we need to make a device like this work – a moderate resolution display and internet access anywhere – it is far from being necessary to our design plans, and in some cases is less than ideal (for example, the iPhone does not let third-party applications run in the background, so a user who is checking their email or browsing the web will not be able to receive invitation notification or other live information until they return to SociaLive). Ideally, we would make SociaLive to run on Windows Mobile, or perhaps simply make it a rich (possibly Flash-based) web application which can be run on any desktop, laptop, smartphone, or regular phone with an internet connection. Although these changes would require a UI redesign, there's no theoretical reason it couldn't be done.

Finally, further work could be done with respect to privacy options and social groups. Although we didn't think it necessary to have more than 4 privacy categories, it isn't hard to imagine a situation where somebody might want to have finer control over their privacy settings – things aren't always as cut-and-dry as "Person Y is a friend of mine, therefore should always be able to see where I'm going and who I'm with". People naturally tend to have multiple social groups who have different interests and tastes, and a user might very well want to disappear for a night from the SociaLive maps of her Bible Studies friends when she's out "getting so hammered". Similarly a user might want to have groups of friends for other reasons, making it quick to invite the whole Frisbee team to a game, or all of one's bowling buddies to dinner.

In short, although SociaLive has a great deal of usefulness in its current state, there's still room for it to grow and mature into a more useful social networking tool. Still, we feel that the present iteration is a fairly complete product, which a great many users would enjoy.