Title of Project:

DawgConnect: The Community and Professionalism UGA App

Describe Project in 300 - 500 Words:

Coming to university is a difficult time for anyone, and making friends can be one of the biggest issues someone can face. With DawgConnect, UGA students can link up with one another based on their personal interests, club and organization affiliations, and professional profiles.

Students select from a variety of hobbies and interests and rank them on a sliding scale from moderate interest to greatest interest. This, along with other qualifiers such as majors and minors, organizations, and prior event attendance, allows them to connect with other individuals that share the aforementioned interests, and for them to match with others that they may not have met yet.

With the UGA Student Involvement Network, clubs and organizations have the option to have a presence on the platform, and can be visible as a way for recruitment to people who may be looking for a larger group of people to interact with that share a particular interest or hobby. Approval may be needed in the event of a group such as a Greek Life group or individual group leadership, but users would know more about who they are engaging with.

The sliding scale method allows users to present a greater emphasis on multiple topics if need be, and the scale can then be utilized to match users on a finer level. This can also be used for organizations throughout the UGA Student Involvement Network to match with students that are open to joining in their efforts depending on the topics that they have as an interest. UGA event registration can be displayed as well, which allows another way for students to connect before, during, and after the events.

This application fills a niche of students struggling to find their place within the social aspect of university, and connects members of the Bulldog Nation that have yet to meet one another to forge friendships and professional relationships that will last a lifetime.

Relevant Instructions for Use:

Users create a profile using their UGAEmail. This includes name, pronouns, major, expected date of graduation, as well as any additional supplemental information.

From there, they rank a list of interests on a sliding scale of "not at all interested" to "extremely interested". These interests include but are not limited to: sports, writing, watching movies, etc.

Users then add any organizations they are members of - this is subject to the organization then to approve/recognize their membership, such as Greek Life communities. Additional communities can be connected through the UGA Student Involvement Network.

It is then up to the user to add links to their various profiles, such as LinkedIn.

After profile completion, users can indicate if they have attended events such as BeWell UGA or UGAHacks. With users having "checked in" to these events, they can then meet with others that they could have possibly missed, but share similar interests with.

With a fully completed profile, users can then seek to "match" with others that share similar interests, organizations, and events.

UGA organizations also have the option to be recommended to users, particularly if an organization has a large population of users that are incredibly interested in a particular activity or hobby (such as community service).

After users are "matched", they have the option to further their friendship and professional relationship.

How does it impact the UGA community:

Making friends in any capacity can be difficult, particularly if you don't know where to start. This program would utilize clubs, communities, and members of the UGA community to connect people to one another in a way that would support those who may not know where to start.

This application balances professional connections and friendships; by allowing individuals of the community to rate their interests on a sliding scale as well as link their professional websites and what organizations they are affiliated with, they can create greater bonds that last for a lifetime.

How AI Generative Technology Assisted:

ChatGPT assisted in providing some of the parameters for what one would need to look for in the development of this application while taking into mind the goal of the project. It also assisted in the providing of a name for the application, as well as clarifying the scale in which organizations and users can coincide together.

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Detailed Documentation Process:

I addressed a major issue that's familiar to all UGA students - making friends. This is an issue that happens to everyone: new students, graduate students, transfer students, and those looking to engage and establish their own community and make their own mark on the University of Georgia campus. Creating an application linked with the UGA Student Involvement Network would further allow students to showcase which clubs and organizations they are in.

With this issue in mind, I began to do some research. Introverts in my social circle shared issues that they have with making friends, such as describing the variety of scope in which their interests are important to them and making connections with others who have similar goals in terms of academics or group organizations.

After doing some research, I began to work with ChatGPT on the development of the theoreticals for this application. This process was done by tasking the AI with queries on how to properly connect users based on their interests and professional websites. I then worked with it to create some ideas on what could be fulfilled on the profile, and then names for the program.

Afterwards, the information was compiled into a legible fashion in a Google Document for submission to the Generative AI Competition.

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