

Växjö Go! - a Digital Humanities Poster Project Proposal to Support Inclusion and Promote Local Culture

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INTRODUCTION

The Digital Humanities (DH) project at Linnaeus University (LNU) have provided the external partners of this proposal with the opportunity to each pinpoint their needs for expressing and sharing their respective organizations' everyday activities through mobile digital technologies. It is the main object for each external partner to promote societal inclusion in Växjö, and to increase the overall knowledge of what they each can offer the public regarding local literature and music. This project proposal mainly applies to DH Symposium theme 3, and to subthemes 1, 4, 7 & 8.

Inspired by the world-renowned mobile game "Pokemon Go!" we are aiming at developing a "Växjö Go!" mobile application that aspires to inspire activity, inclusion and collaboration, by providing users with access to some of Växjö's cultural points of interest (POI). Each POI can be collected as rewards (either bronze, silver, gold or diamond icon quills (for literature POI:s) or ditto G clefs (for music POI:s). Each POI will offer additional information (e.g. an author's portrait, a text example, a piece of music, etc.) connected to the author or composer. You can also share your daily rewards score along with your opinion of the provided additional info by using emoticons.

Additionally, for Växjö as a city with rapid growth in multiple sectors, the application can serve as a tool for increasing inclusion and kinship of the citizens of Växjö. With the application, users can express their daily mood with the "How is Växjö Today?" feature by choosing a color and one of a select number of emoticons. The mood votes will be GPS mediated so that each Växjö district get its own vote, alongside the grand total for all districts. The results will be accessible on a Växjö map in the app where you can zoom in on each district or see the overall Växjö result, hour by hour. The mood results can also be visualized on the public displays of Växjö, such as on the buses, in the libraries, at schools, at the municipality head offices, etc.

REALIZATION MODE AND POSSIBLE RESEARCH AREAS

This DH project proposal builds on two basic ideas. One is to present some of the cultural points of interests of Växjö everyday life, and the other is to try to increase the overall interconnection between different Växjö districts by asking and visualizing "How is Växjö today?"

The application will offer several modes of gathering and sharing POI:s, of which two are the most prominent: Either you go for an active "culture POI hunt" and receive rewards at each POI, or you will be duly prompted when just passing a POI (provided that you have activated this function in the application). Regardless of method, users have the possibility to gather POI:s, learn more through the additional information provided, achieve rewards (quills for literary rewards, G clefs for music rewards), and share results with others. The quill/G clef is clickable for the user to retrieve additional information (e.g. a short portrait, a piece of music, or an URL to further info).

The “How is Växjö today” part of the application will allow everyone with the app to participate, however you need to allow the app to use location services on your mobile device. When voting, the applications automatically includes GPS coordinates, time of day, and emoticon + color chosen by the user. The voting procedure can be fulfilled twice a day per user. The results will be analyzed and visualized on a Växjö map in the application, and presented on public displays in Växjö, e.g. on buses, at the university, in schools, at the libraries (schools, town and university), etc.

The design and test group will involve external project partners (which will have the possibility to further invite participants from ongoing related projects in their respective organizations), LNU researchers, pupils from upper secondary schools in Växjö, and other representatives of the Växjö citizens.

Proposed research areas for an upcoming study could be:

- In what ways can initiatives like this make a difference? Will this particular combination of “the digital” and “the humanities” really make people more interested of cultural elements in their immediate surroundings? And, in which ways will it (if at all) encourage people to meet over the invisible but still obvious borders between different parts of Växjö?
- What are the requirements (and on what levels do they apply) for inspiring further cultural institutions to collaborate and share their various materials through the proposed technology?

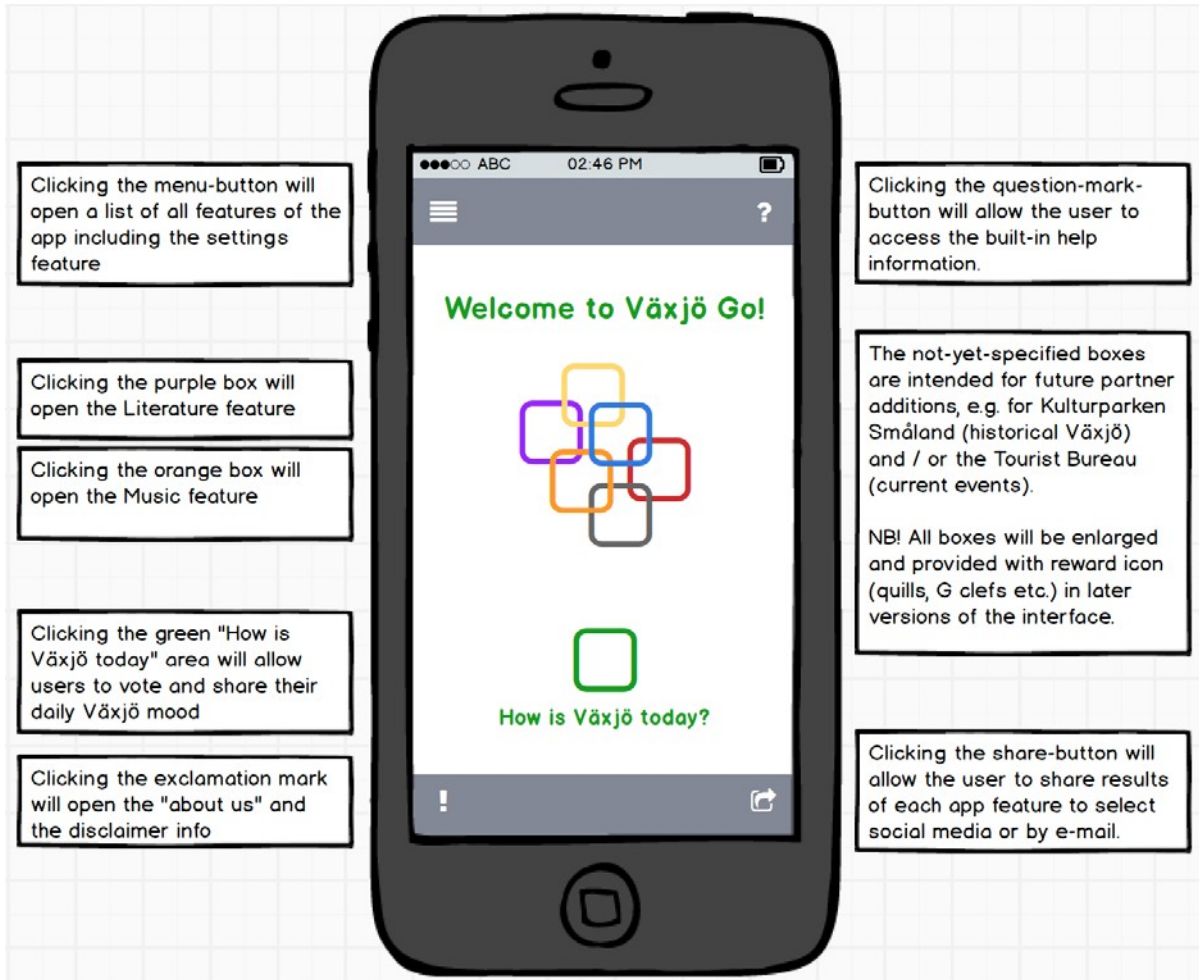
We can already now see that the Växjö Go! application could easily include more partners, e.g. Kulturparken Småland (with “Historical Växjö”), the local Facebook group “Images of Old Växjö”, and the Tourist Bureau (with “Current Events” etc.). The initial thought has been and still is to create a tool that could serve multiple cultural Växjö interests.

However, a limitation at the very end - fulfilling this project proposal is one thing, but “who” (i.e. what Växjö “entity”) would take over the everyday management and support of the application? We see that application ownership and everyday maintenance needs to be defined as one of the first steps of this proposal in order to avoid extensive delays, or even project failure.

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APPENDIX (2 IMAGES)





Clicking the Literary Feature, will allow the user to:

- Recieve POI alerts (focused around Växjö authors and their works)
- Collect POI rewards - bronze, silver, gold and diamond quills - depending on how many POI rewards you have collected so far
- Share their results to social media
- Learn about the POI content/author/work through clicking the gathered quill and getting a brief presentation offered in the application
- Give feedback with emoticons on the POI and its info
- Find out more about the authors and their works by clicking the provided URL of each POI

Clicking the "How is Växjö today?" feature, will allow the user to:

- Give own vote on daily Växjö mood by picking one color and one emoticon
- On a zoomable map, see and follow the results how the overall Växjö mood is day by day. This will update twice a day: morning and evening
- On the same zoomable map, view the result of each district of Växjö city.
- Comment and share the results to social media

All votes will be GPS mediated, meaning if the user does not allow the application to use localization services, votes cannot be registered.