

The ConPanion

A mobile helper for attending conferences

Preface

This is a rough draft. Don't expect to much from it. Use at your own risk.

Abstract

The ConPanion is a mobile app for getting information about a convention, summit, exhibition or similar events, based on content hosted by the convention itself. In addition it is a service for creating and hosting such content and providing add-on services like update notifications and ad-hoc meetings and services around the convention like car rental or hotel reservation.

Functionality

The ConPanion is based on three modules. First it is a mobile app which can read a specific XML document from the website of a conventions web page. The file contains all information about the convention like talks, schedules, rooms, meetings. It allows the user to plan its trip to and stay at the convention. Make a personal session schedule, look at the different talks and periodically read updates from the maintainers web page. This functionality is free of charge for the end user.

In addition a commercial service is offered in two different variants. First, as an extension, the convention can choose to "opt-in" for additional services around their convention. They still provide their own content file, but, with no additional effort, unlock features like allowing ad-hoc meetings for interest groups or notifications, based on recognized changes to the original content file. These services have to be unlocked once for each convention.

Second a web based service to author the content file is offered. In this case the content file is no longer hosted by the convention itself, but by the provider of the solution.

Monetization

The mobile app itself is free of charge. Of course it would be possible to generate statistics and try to generate revenue around this. In addition to providing the original content from the convention, the mobile app can show offers around the convention, like train/flight tickets, hotel rooms, rental cars, restaurants.

The "opt-in" extension services can be bought with a "one time fee" with a limit to users. So the more users are expected to use this service, the higher the price. Simply since more users will also increase the cost.

The ConPanion

The full service will allow to create a convention for free, but publishing it will require to pay like for the "opt-in" extension services.

Target audience

Users which go to conventions, summits, talks, exhibitions. Organizers of conventions which would like to offer some additional services around their convention but lack the resources to create a mobile presence for themselves.

The free tier

In order to gain acceptance of the tool it is important to offer some free value. Paying for the mobile app will most likely drive away customers from the start and reduce the number of people using the service as a whole.

Allowing a free use of "own content file" will convince some conventions to offer the service, since it will bring a benefit to their convention. The effort to create and host the content is in the hand of the organizer. They can decide how much effort they invest, but don't have to invest money. At the same time information about conventions can be gathered in statistics and extra offerings can be placed at the end user.