**Off-Campus Housing Resources**

**Case Studies**

**Comparable Solutions – Ohio State University**

Ohio State University is comparable to the University of Cincinnati. Both are large public research institutions set in the heart of a Midwestern Urban Center. They have a comprehensive Off-Campus Housing resource that is linked directly through the main University webpage. We are examining features of their website, which is hosted by OSU student government, as a baseline model for our solution.

**OSU Webpage Screenshot**

OSU Resources are located in one central Off-Campus Housing directory.

OSU Undergraduate Student Government publishes an annual Off Campus Housing “Catalog”.

Their website includes the following features:
- Searchable Database of Properties
- Roommate / Sublease Finder
- Login ability for Landlords
- Conflict Resolution
- Transportation Information
- Roommate Agreements
- Safety Information
- Move In & Move Out

**OSU Resource Sitemap**

The resources available through the University of Cincinnati are not consolidated. There is no single site to access information, and some information is very difficult to find.

**UC Resources Sitemap**

The resources available through the University of Cincinnati are not consolidated. There is no single site to access information, and some information is very difficult to find.

**Problem Statement:** UC students are currently ill informed and equipped to find affordable, appropriate, and safe off campus housing with fair and honest landlords.

**Supporting Data**

**Clarion Partners**

*The Opportunity in Student Housing Investment*[^2]

“There is generally an under supply of high quality on- and off-campus housing that is safe, secure, well priced, professionally managed, and with modern amenities.”

**University of British Columbia**

Student Rental Experience Survey Data[^1]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fair &amp; Honest Landlords</th>
<th>Appropriateness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of students claiming to have experienced discrimination of age, gender, or ethnicity with landlords.

Percentage of students consider Appropriateness (Roommates & Overall Quality) to be a barrier to finding off-campus housing.

**Sources Cited**

Off-Campus Housing Resources
Improving the Experience at UC

Business Model

An independent business undertakes effort to provide Safe Housing

Self-sustaining, profitable business

To join the website listing, users pay a nominal fee

SHO provides a housing website

Initial basic advertising

Landlords are encouraged to conform

Student hears about listing website and safety

Even more listings

University points students toward the resource

Increased listings

We can help resolve issues students have in finding off campus housing by making the information they need accurate, usable, and easily accessible. A website consolidating the updated information would provide a viable solution and present a profitable business model.

Current Situation

Off-campus housing is an issue that affects all parties involved, and each of these parties have desires that can be solved.

Students

- Off-campus housing is a more affordable option
- Various resources available but unorganized and scattered
  - Graduate student housing list
  - Fire Safety Tips
- Students want to have more freedom in living conditions

University

- University is landlocked and relies on landlords for more housing
- With a growing student population, UC needs more off-campus housing
- Obligated to keep students safe
- With a growing student population, UC needs more off-campus housing
- Provide some scattered resources

Landlords

- Desire all properties to be occupied
- University needs landlords to provide housing
- Most local off-campus residences are occupied by students
- Landlords would like to have their name promoted, especially by the university
Improving the Experience at UC

Website Design

One of the easiest ways to present a large amount of data in a manageable fashion would be through a website. A simple design (like the one below) would work excellently to provide students with all of the information they need, in a manner that they can use.

Resources
- Fire Safety Tips/Code
- TIP Line
- Renter Laws
- Lease Tips
- Conflict Resolution

Database
- Searchable by common parameters
  - Size
  - Location
  - Price
  - Landlord
- Student Reviews
- Safety Ratings

Roommate Finder
- Roommate “Match-Maker”
- Find roommates with similar interests/majors
- Guidelines for making roommate agreements

The Benefits

The execution of this project would depend on the support of three main groups: the students, the university, and the landlords. Each party plays an essential role, but everyone also has the potential to gain from participating as well.

Students
- Roommate Finder
- Money-saving Tips
- Safety and Legal Resources
- All Available Housing Listed
- “One-Stop” for Housing
- Can save a lot of time using simple search features

Landlords
- Possible Insurance cuts for recognized safer housing
- Get name out to students
- Increased renter return rate
- Easier distribution of information
- Less interaction with uninterested students

University
- Duty to keep students safe
- Can advertise safer housing to parents and incoming students
- Keeping a Reputation of Safety, and a safer public image
- Can condemn poor housing without official opinions
How safe is it to walk across the street?

In 2010, there were 4,280 fatalities and 70,000 injuries due to traffic crashes in the United States. Between the years 1997 and 2006, there were 53 deaths due to car crashes in Ohio alone. On average, a pedestrian or motorist is injured every 8 minutes, and one is killed every 2 hours.

http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/pedestrian_safety/factsheet.html

Pedestrian Death by Speed Limit

- Less than 30
- Speed Limit 30
- Speed Limit 40
- Speed Limit 50

Key: 1 Death

Every year in Cincinnati, five pedestrians die in a crash.

Often, alcohol is to blame.

In 47% of crashes that lead to pedestrian fatality, alcohol is involved. 33% of these pedestrians had a blood alcohol concentration of .08 grams per deciliter or more.

Our Research

Data was collected from 7:30am to 8:00am, 11:30am to 12:00pm, and 5:00pm to 5:30pm. Two different crosswalks were examined; these crosswalks were used as a sample to represent all of the crosswalks on Jefferson Avenue.

Jay Walkers: 6%
Distracted: 14%
Not Distracted: 80%
Case Study- Watch For Me NC

As a state, North Carolina wanted to improve pedestrian education and in turn improve safety.

Did you know:
• 2000+ people are hit by motor vehicles in North Carolina every year.
• 160+ people are killed by motor vehicles in North Carolina every year.

The “Watch for Me NC” campaign was introduced by the state to make the streets safer for pedestrians.

Before and after a class about yielding laws, a test was administered to police officers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts and Knowledge</th>
<th>Before % Correct</th>
<th>After % Correct</th>
<th>Difference in Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Score</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Score</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New York City had the highest pedestrian fatality rate, and responded by enacting an Anti-Speeding Law in April of 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Fatality Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>1743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer Deadly Accidents

New York City traffic fatalities rose slightly in 2010 from 2009, but the number was still well below levels earlier in the decade.

Source: New York City Department of Transportation

New York released banners like the one below and saw pedestrian fatalities in 2009 decrease by nearly 20 percent from 2001.
Conjecture
Student injuries could be significantly reduced through the use of an educational app and safety reminders at crosswalks.

Risky Crossing App
App is offered to students at orientation to educate them about pedestrian safety. As an incentive, students will be offered a discount at the bookstore for playing the game. Our app is branded with a logo that features a memorable skull and crossbones style design.

Start Screen
• The title screen that is the first screen players encounter.

Level One
• Very easy with little distraction/danger

Level Two
• Features rush hour traffic.
• More difficult as more cars are present

Level Four
• Features distracting text messages which pop up in random places on screen.

Level Completion Screen
• Completion Screen- features pedestrian facts

Level 1
• Basic Tutorial

Level 2
• Rush Hour Traffic

Level 3
• Intoxicated Cross

Level 4
• Cell Phone Distraction

Level 5
• Drunk Drivers

Level 6
• Combination
• Custom

Hey! I'm Risky Ricky!
Let's go see what my buddy is up to across campus!
It's already 5 and I need to go study. Hopefully traffic isn't bad!
I better text my buddies to see what's going on tonight.
I'm lucky I made it through alive. That level was crazy!
Our research found that pedestrians were exhibiting risky habits such as crossing the street intoxicated and jaywalking. In order to solve this problem, we suggest educating pedestrians about the dangers of their behavior using tools such as an app and crosswalk modification. Pedestrians are now more street savvy and are less likely to injure themselves or others.

Connection of App to the Crosswalk

To improve pedestrian safety we propose certain crosswalk modifications that would improve the visibility of the designated crossing areas, as well as the people inside of them.

To decrease jaywalking a modification will be made to the crosswalk to allow for the pedestrian to start crossing before cars stop.

In order to make the designated crossing area more visible during the day, it will be painted a vibrant color.

To improve crossing visibility at night, lights will be installed under the crosswalk and turned on when pedestrians enter the crosswalk.

Poles installed on opposite sides of the street will shine lasers across the road and create walking figures that create a barrier between the pedestrians and the cars.
Problem Statement:
What prevents students from knowing about social entertainment events in the Cincinnati downtown area?

Survey Questions and Results:
We surveyed over 50 different people from different backgrounds and majors to determine if students were even interested in downtown events, and if so what was preventing them from taking advantage of the events.

1. Have you ever wanted to know more about social events that happen in downtown Cincinnati?
2. Would you be interested in attending any of the following events?
3. How do you hear about the events from Question (2) being advertised?
4. What kinds of factors limit your ability to go to these downtown events?

Note: Description of the events is below.

Events the Questions Focused On

- **Cincy Brew-Ha-Ha**
  This festival, occurring in late August, features a combination of comedy and local beer that is unique in the area.

- **Bunbury Music Festival**
  A large, relatively new festival which features many music performances. Already one of the most popular festivals in the area!

- **Flying Pig Marathon**
  This is the largest marathon run in the Cincinnati area, with plenty of volunteer opportunities to take advantage of!

- **Taste of Cincinnati USA**
  The biggest street festival held in Cincinnati, this is one of the best culinary art festivals in the country!
Conjecture:
The pathway of our research, including our conclusion about the causes of the issue along with possible solutions.

Cincinnati has great social events that it offers
However, students do not seem to take advantage of it
Why weren’t these events being properly communicated to students?

How do we continue the flow of information?
We found that people did want to know about these events
The problem is that there was a Lack of Communication from UC about these events

Solutions
Promote the event info through:
• Social media (which already has this information)
• CampusLink
• The News Record

Case Studies:
Other universities were researched as case studies to find ways to overcome students’ lack of knowledge about social entertainment events in the city.
The universities chosen are in similar urban environments as the University of Cincinnati.

Methods to Communicate Events:
- Newspaper Advertisements
- Student Ticket Discount Website
- Free Bus Rides

Methods to Communicate Events:
- Honors 101 Course
  - Allows students to explore the city and share what they find.
The Question:
How can we increase students’ awareness of city events that occur in downtown Cincinnati?

Stakeholder: Nicole Ausmer, PhD. Assistant Director for Student Activities and Leadership Development

Creating a Student Group (CincyCats):
In order for more students to become aware of Cincinnati events, the information must be brought to them. In order for this to be done, a new student group must be created on campus. This new student group will not only advertise events so that students are aware of them, but will hopefully make students interested enough to actually attend these events.

How will CincyCats transmit information about Cincinnati events?

Social Media
Using the internet, we can exploit social media in order to create a viral marketing presence.

YouTube
This video sharing site is a primary way for an idea to become “viral.” If used properly, can be a great method to attract attention to an event.

Hootsuite
This online tool can be used to organize a group’s social media accounts. It can even send out timed messages to create a viral effect.

UC Support
With the help of resources available on UC’s campus that are afforded to student groups, more “conventional” marketing can be utilized.

UC Campus Link
This new website is being utilized by student groups as a tool to post their events for others to see. This will allow us to be visible to other groups and new students checking out the site.

Collaboration
Being a student group allows us easier access to other student groups on campus. By attending other groups’ meetings and partnering with them, this collaboration will allow us to gain an even wider presence across campus.

Presence on Campus
Using music is a good way to engage students. This may work specifically with music-related events, such as the Bunbury Music Festival. If people hear music that they like, they may be more likely to go to the event!

Using Humor
Funny advertising is a method that is particularly effective. People create an instant connection to a humorous ad, and this can be used on campus to draw attention (like this as an example for The Simpsons Movie).

Interaction with Students
UC Batman was a guerrilla method used to promote the Sigma Sigma Carnival last year. By drawing Batman logos across campus, people became interested. We would use a similar tactic in advertising city events.
Off-Campus Housing Resources

Researching the Problem

UC Student Survey Results

50 University of Cincinnati students were surveyed to assess the need to address four specific aspects of finding Off Campus Housing: Safety, Affordability, Appropriateness, and Fair and Honest Landlords. Their responses and further explanations are given below.

UC Students

Off Campus Housing

Safety

In August 2013, the City of Cincinnati created the Student Safe Housing List in response to the deaths of two UC students in an off-campus fire.

Chad Kohls

Ellen Garner

At this point, the Student Safe Housing List has 116 properties by 9 different landlords in its database. When asked about fire safety and using this resource, survey data shows:

- 80% of UC students are concerned with safety off campus
- But only 5% know about Cincinnati Safe Student Housing

The current information available is incomplete and unknown by nearly all UC students.

Affordability

Due to a limited ability to evaluate or effect economic data for UC students, we chose to examine how students determine the value of housing options.

Our data shows the most popular method of determining the value of off campus housing (76%) is consulting peer opinions.

Appropriateness

40% of students have changed their off-campus housing due to inappropriateness.

20-25% Multiple Changes!

Our data shows the most popular method of determining the value of off campus housing (76%) is consulting peer opinions.

Fair and Honest Landlords

20% of student’s have had a landlord they consider to be dishonest or unfair. Half of those who indicated issues said they would have appreciated legal advice.

Other Available Resources

Fair & Honest Landlords

Government website dedicated to tenant rights. Site here: This site is linked through the UC Graduate Webpage.

These resources are not advertised to undergraduate students, however.

The website also includes a link to typical landlord-tenant problems and the actions available.

Site here:

Fire Safety

Through the UC Office of Student Affairs, there is an brochure available to educate students on the do's and don'ts of off campus fire safety. This resource is shown below and includes outdated information including types of approved smoke detectors.

In general, UC sourced Off-Campus Housing Information is scattered and out-of-date. UC students are largely unaware any even exists.