

News

Website connecting students over the summer expanding to Ivy League

By Kristin Qian (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171216040310/http://www.dailyprincetonian.com/staff/kristin-qian>) | Apr 2, 2015

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Summer Playbook, an online map of the summer locations of Ivy League students, is expanding later this month to encompass all Ivy League colleges, including the University.

Neeraj Bajpayee '17 is mapping University students' summer locations, expanding the website founded by Harvard sophomore Luke Heine last April.

Heine said that many people have asked why the site is only restricted to the Ivy League, with people raising concerns about elitism.

"It's not supposed to feel that way," Heine said, "and I don't want that to shine through."

He explained that he chose the Ivy League because there is camaraderie — or "shared culture" — between the schools.

Ivy League students are also some of the most likely students to travel all over the world during the summer, Heine added.

Summer Playbook is taking part in a venture capital incubator for startup companies but is currently a not-for profit project, Heine said.

The endeavor started off as a Facebook post in which Heine asked his classmates to mark the places where they would be over the summer, he said. Within a week, 800 people had responded, posting locations in 36 countries and six continents.

Bajpayee met Heine in his senior year of high school in Singapore and responded enthusiastically when Heine asked him to help coordinate the project at the University.

"Something really fantastic about Princeton students is that they have both the opportunity and the interest to go around the world," Bajpayee said, adding that it can be daunting to be in a foreign country without knowing anyone upon arrival, and that the website can help students get acquainted with each other.

Data from last summer indicates people who signed up through Summer Playbook used it frequently over the course of their internships or study abroad programs, Heine said.

Among those interviewed, University students shared mixed feelings about the new project.

The program is interesting and has potential, Patrick Flanigan '18 said, noting, however, that he would not use it himself.

"It just doesn't seem like it would work for me, but I could see it working for others," he said.

Others said they believe the website may be unnecessary.

"I think it's a good idea, but I feel like it's a bit redundant," Amanda Blanco '18 said. "Any other form of social media like Facebook and Twitter could serve the same purpose."

Jessica Ma '15 created an application called Spot last year for University students, whose purpose was also to help students meet other students over the summer and find roommates while traveling. The program was inspired by the original platform called Pton.in (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171216040310/http://dailyprincetonian.com/news/2013/05/pton-in-connects-students-to-peers-over-the-summer/>), which was launched in 2013. Ma, Momchil Tomov '14, and Raymond Zhong '15 created the new platform from scratch last year and ended up having over 2,000 users.

Spot is currently still in use and is partnered with the Undergraduate Student Government, but it only connects University students.

Ma said she does not see any problem with Summer Playbook affecting the number of people signing up for Spot.

"I don't really see it as a competition," Ma said. "We already have 2,000 people in our network, so we already have this user base. When you register for something, you want to register because tons of people are already registered."

Spot has partnered with Career Services and the International Internship Program, and hosted a meet-and-greet event last year that allowed students to meet the other students in person before the summer. This year, the USG has expressed interest in working with Spot.

Compared to Summer Playbook, Spot is open to the public, since people sign up through their Facebook accounts. People can also sign up for Spot anytime throughout the summer, whereas Summer Playbook has a registration deadline. Additionally, Spot has filter features that allow people to filter by class year or by Princeton students only.

Nonetheless, Ma thinks that Summer Playbook is noteworthy.

"I have nothing against Summer Playbook," Ma said. "I think they have a good idea and I would use it. It's fun."

Ma estimates that Spot will revamp around the end of April.

Summer Playbook will launch on April 14.

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