# Mobile Tour Manager

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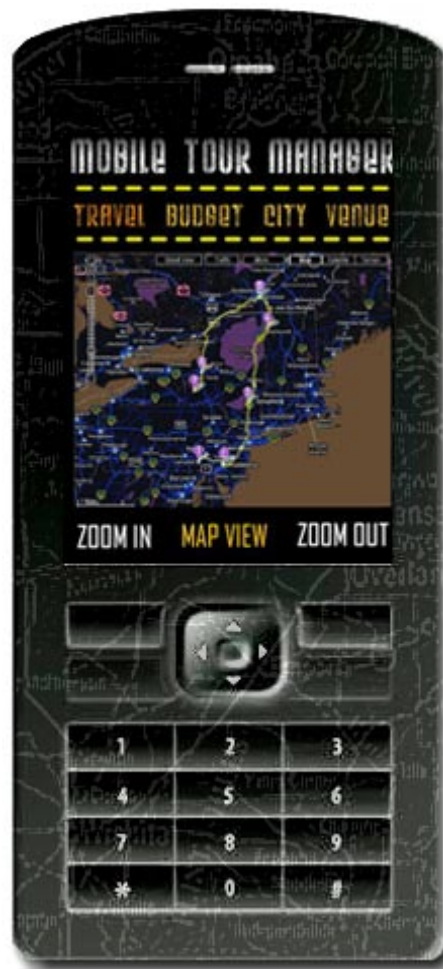
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# Abstract

This paper focuses on mobile innovation in the music industry. Specifically, it focuses on an essential aspect of success in the music industry – touring. Mobile Tour Manager (MTM) is a prototype mobile device application designed with the touring individual musician, or band, in mind. This paper will introduce the logistical, practical, and sometimes unforeseen problems associated with touring, as well how this application can be applied to the unique circumstances of a band on the road. It will also explain the design and functionality of the Mobile Tour Manager in detail, by focusing on the four main sections of the application. Finally, it will discuss the technology behind the Mobile Tour Manager, and the business models used in this application. By the end of this paper, you will understand how MTM can assist with managing a tour, and why it is ultimately the best solution for touring bands.

# Introduction

For as long as bands have been on the road, problems have arisen with the logistics of travel, budgeting, and destination.  At any given moment there are countless details that may influence the outcome of a tour.  First and foremost, basic travel concerns are compounded by the stress of arriving on time at a specific location day after day.  One missed or delayed show can throw off, or prematurely end, an entire tour.  This is in large part due to budgeting factors, which play a major role in keeping a band on the road.  Many bands rely on successful merchandise sales to keep them going, and can't always depend on the honesty of venues to come through with the night's guarantee.

Also, arriving in a new city to play in an unfamiliar venue can mean disaster for the inexperienced touring band.  With the excitement of touring, bands often overlook proper networking, promotional opportunities, and other resources available to them. While no mobile device application could ever replace the resourcefulness of an intelligent human being, specifically a tour manager, some touring musicians simply cannot afford one.  Musicians finding themselves in this situation would most greatly benefit from having the Mobile Tour Manager on the road.

The Mobile Tour Manager is divided into four primary sections -

1. Travel
2. Budget
3. City
4. Venue

# 1. Travel

When the user clicks on Travel a new screen appears with the following information – Tour Itinerary allows the user to enter the basic touring information – date, city, and venue into the application. This information is applied across the board to many other aspects of the application. The Tour Itinerary then suggests an alternative tour route based simply on the travel distance between venues, and gives the option to update the itinerary. This may not be useful once a band has committed to set dates and venues, but in the preliminary stages of tour planning it may offer an overlooked more efficient touring route.

The View Map option is next, and simply gives the user a map view of the tour route, allowing the user to zoom in for detailed views of an unfamiliar city. Get Directions simply provides detailed directions from point A to B, and by default is set to update to the next venue on the tour route. Mileage provides the current mileage, miles to next venue, average daily mileage and total tour miles. Lastly in the Travel section, Time gives the current time and travel time to next venue.

## 2. Budget

The Budget Section allows the user to keep a close eye on their earning and spending resources on the road.  The Travel Budget includes fuel, food, and hotel costs, and averages the daily cost of each to estimate total costs.  While these costs can change dramatically from day to day, this feature can be more effective the more information is provided.  Fuel costs allow the user to enter average miles per gallon for their particular vehicle and cost of fuel depending on location.

The Merchandise Inventory tracks product sales from each venue and gives the user a remaining stock figure, without having to go through boxes of merchandise every night.  The Guarantees section averages the total revenue from shows and gives the user a friendly reminder of how much they can expect to earn.  The Advance Ticket Sales gives the user an idea of how many presale tickets have already sold.  This can give the band an idea of what kind of drawing power they may have in a particular city, and how much leverage this may allow them.

# 3. City

The City section gives the user a comprehensive listing of resources they can use in a particular city. The Fan Base Locator works as a database that pulls from fan information gathered over time. This section, like many of Mobile Tour Manager's services, is more effective with the more information provided to it. From this fan list, users can contact their street team, or field representatives, as well as journalists and promoters. This networking service can be useful for promoting an upcoming show well in advance (and not forgetting anyone on the guest list).

The City section also provides comprehensive listings of radio stations, record stores, and venues. These listings provide networking and promotional opportunities. The venue section allows the user to set venue preferences for a particular city. This information is also applied to the tour itinerary service, so that the user will be reminded of preferred venues when planning a tour route.

# 4. Venue

The comprehensive Venue section provides important details about a venue, such as location, maximum occupancy, and hours of operation.  The Contacts section allows users to keep track of important venue contacts, such as the booking agent and management.  The Contracts section keeps tracks of essential information including, once again, the guarantee, as well as any deposits, ticket prices at the door, whether the venue is insured, anticipated playing time, number of guests, and whether recordings are allowed or denied.

This information may not insure the band gets what they specified, but it can greatly reduce the confusion of keeping track of individual venue policies and agreements.  Lastly the rider section specifies catering and technical requirements, including what the band can expect upon arrival, as well as dressing room needs, stage and general performance considerations.

# Technology Description

The Mobile Tour Manger's technology requires a mobile device with internet access. It can run on any mobile device. The Mobile Tour Manager can intelligently locate and take advantage of multiple services using several open source applications. The Mobile Tour Manger's travel service uses an open source map service, similar to Google Earth or Google Maps, in combination with a GPS tracker.

The Mobile Tour Manager's budgeting system calculates from an open source spreadsheet, similar to Excel. The Mobile Tour Manager's venue database and fan database pull information from databases which can be accessed, created and maintained by the user either on the mobile device, or from a remote network. The city listings pull information from a service provider's database and are not updated or maintained by the user. The application is both location sensitive and context aware.

The visuals on the next two pages show the applications behind the Map View, Tour Itinerary, and Travel Budget services.

# #1 Map View in Google Maps



Mobile Tour Manager gives users a visual tour itinerary in its Map View travel feature.

This allows user's to plot their tour itinerary well in advance, and refer to it for directions

once the tour has begun.

## #2 Tour Itinerary and Travel Budget in an Excel Spreadsheet

| #days | day of week | Date | City | State | Venue | G'tee | Mileage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Friday | 6/20/2008 | Lancaster | PA | Chameleon | $500 | 0 |
| 2 | Saturday | 6/21/2008 | Philadelphia | PA | Khyber | $200 | 80 |
| 3 | Sunday | 6/22/2008 | Woodstock | NY | The Colony | $300 | 193 |
| 4 | Monday | 6/23/2008 | Burlington | VT | Metronome | $500 | 211 |
| 5 | Tuesday | 6/24/2008 | Montreal | QC | Café Chaos | $1,000 | 97 |
| 6 | Wednesday | 6/25/2008 | Syracuse | NY | Happy Endings | $50 | 251 |
| 7 | Thursday | 6/26/2008 | Ithaca | NY | Haunt | $700 | 54 |
| | | | | | | $3,250 | 886 |
| | | | | | Number of Shows | $7 | |
| | | | | | average per show | $464 | |
| | | | | | average daily mileage | | 126.5714 |
| | | | | | average mpg | | 18 |
| | | | | | avg. fuel per gallon | | $3.39 |
| | | | | | avg. daily fuel cost | | $24 |
| | | | | | avg daily profit - fuel | | $440 |
| | | | | | total fuel cost | | $168 |
| | | | | | total profit - gas | | $3,082 |

Mobile Tour Manager calculates information from Tour Itinerary and Travel Budget to suggest the most efficient touring strategy.  Behind the surface of this service is a simple Excel (or similar open source) spreadsheet.

# Business Model

The Mobile Tour Manager utilizes the user fee, improved efficiency, and shared revenue business models.  The application can be downloaded for a free 30 day trial version from http://www.mobiletourmanager.com.  The Mobile Tour Manager service is available on a subscription basis.  A flat monthly rate of $13.95 is charged to the user's account.  Improved efficiency allows for a dizzying array of context aware services.  Users can check up to date merchandise inventory, travel budget, as well as detailed city and venue information – including essential information such as riders and contracts.

Shared revenue services include budgeting and travel planning with Excel and Google Earth, or comparable open source applications, as well as database driven services.  The database service provider would maintain venue and city specific resource information, and allow users to maintain and update their own Fan Base Locator network.

# Conclusion

The next step with the Mobile Tour Manager would be a fully functional prototype and database. The final application would include GPS tracking capabilities to make use of the travel features. A functional spreadsheet would allow for the managing of budget information. The Mobile Tour Manager database would allow for actual venue and city searches. Along with some usability testing and fine tuning, these realistically attainable developments would be all that's necessary to bring the Mobile Tour Manager to life. While nothing can replace a good tour manager, this exciting mobile application could greatly improve the chances of keeping a touring band where it should be - on the road.

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