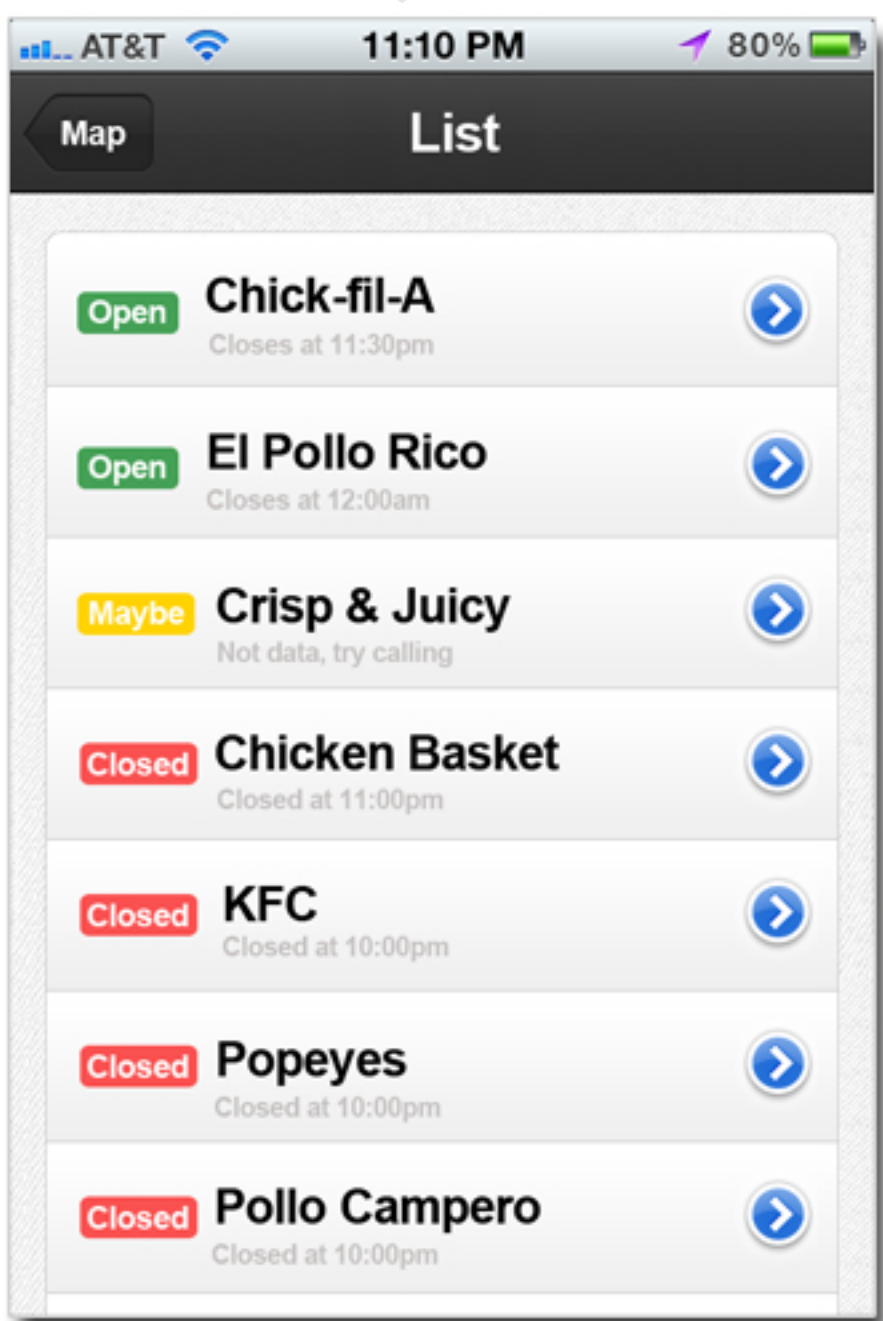
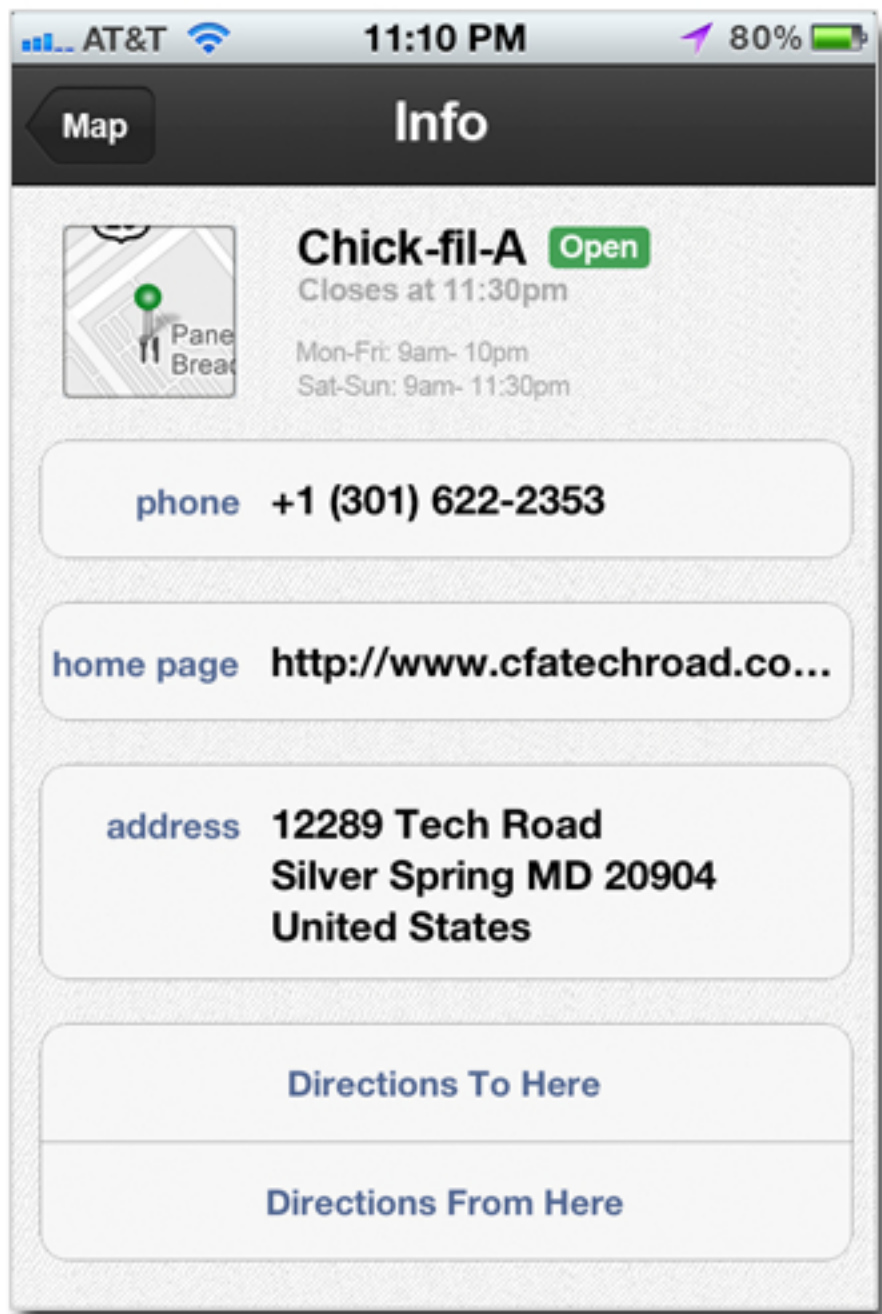
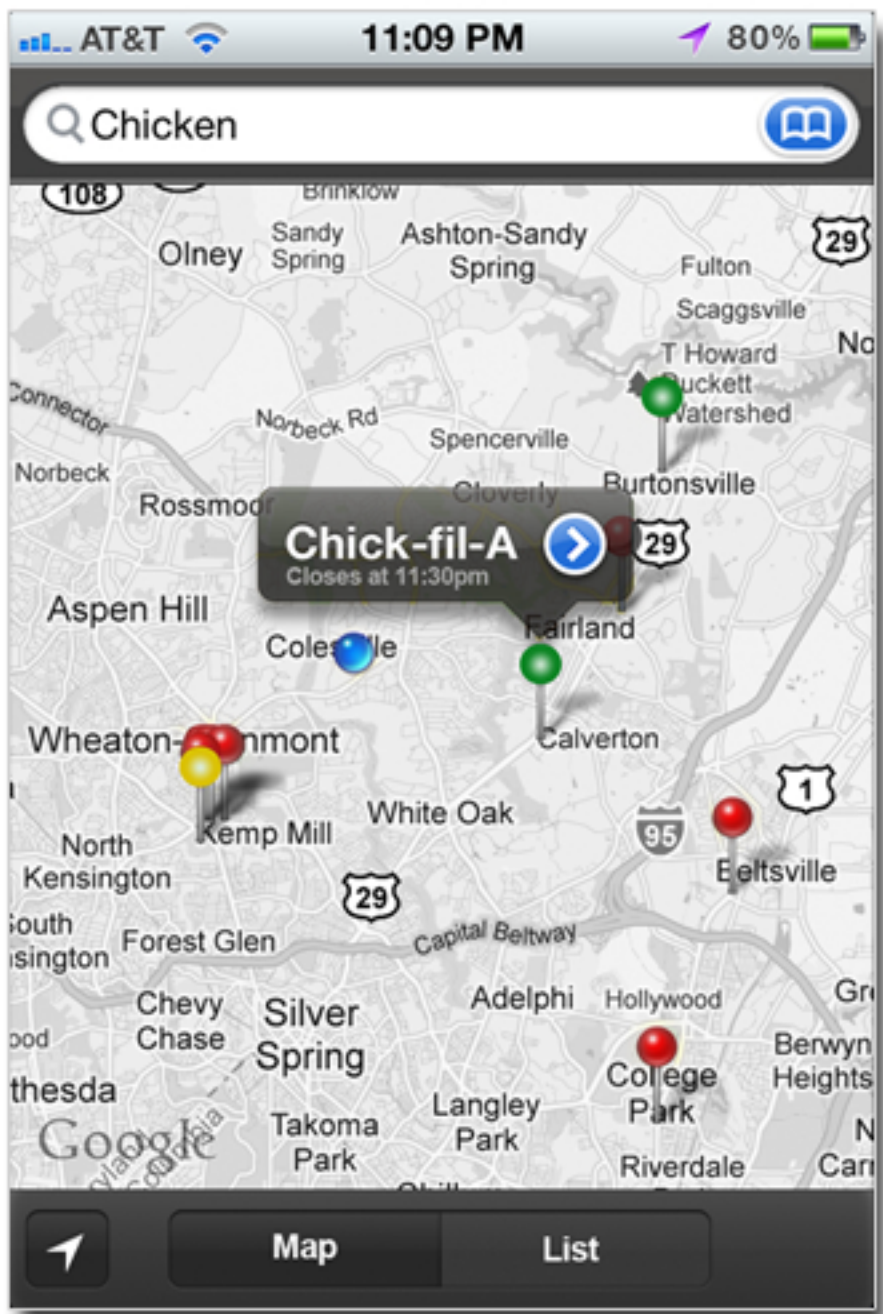




What'sOpen



Inspiration

I always get frustrated trying to search for store hours. I can't understand why it's so hard to access. Businesses make it so difficult to find their hours of operations, it's ridiculous. Trying to find their hours on your mobile device is even harder. I recently experienced this when I was on my way back from a friend's house one Sunday and realized I needed to stop by Target. It was late and it was Sunday, so I thought it would be a good idea to check what time they close before making the trip. I used Google Maps to find the Target store I wanted to visit, but then I had to click a link to Target's website, which then took me to Safari. Once Safari finished loading, I saw it was the homepage and had to find the store locator, allow it to use my location, click on the store I wanted, and finally I found their hours of operations. No one should ever have to suffer through what I did ever again.

Design Process

My design process was rather straight forward. I knew exactly what I wanted the app to do and how I wanted it to do it. I wanted it to be Google Maps for iPhone, but with closed/open information. I knew I wanted it to use Google Map's API, so I just designed it to look very similar to their app. Once I had the vision in my head, I cracked open Photoshop and started designing. Then I showed it to the users.

Implication for Future Iterations

I was very skeptical that the users I interviewed would provide any useful feedback. I really went into the prototype sessions with very low expectations. But to my surprise they provided some really great suggestions that made me go back and tweak the design I had come up with. I'm a big believer in the "users don't know what they want until you show them" theory, and it worked great for my prototype. I suspect that if I had gone to the users with no design they probably would have come up with some elaborate app to show me what stores are open and which ones are closed with all sorts of social media integration, youtube clips, etc. But I wanted something really simple and really really easy to use. So that's what I designed, then the users helped me to refine that design. I'm not sure that I will do any future iterations for this app, it's a very simple app and by the time I had gotten to the last user, the suggestions became more about "this would be cool" rather than suggestions for how to improve the user experience. The next step is to build the app, which will require a lot of work to populate a database with the hours of operations for millions of stores. I'll probably just focus on popular stores in MD at first, or have some other focus, then expand from there.

User 1

Male, 23 years old, iPhone user

User 1 provided the most useful insight. The first design I came up with actually only had a map view. He suggested I make a list view so that he could see all the stores that are open or closed in one view, without having to click on the pins. I immediately agreed, I wondered how I had missed that functionality. Particularly because this list view exists in the Google Maps iPhone app, and my design was inspired by Google Maps.

User 2

Female, 60 years old, Blackberry user

User 2 was not familiar with Google Maps for mobile, so I had to give her hints and clues as to how the app worked. Once she understood how it worked she liked it. However she didn't find the map very useful, she liked the list view much more. She suggested that the app start with the list view. I suspect she suggested this because she does not have experience with a mobile map app. I decided that it's better to meet users where they are, and most iPhone users are familiar with maps.

User 3

Male, 62 years old, Blackberry user

In contrast to User 1, User 3 actually asked if it was necessary to include stores that were closed in the results. This was an interesting thought, but I explained how some users may want to know what time a store closes so that they can plan accordingly next time. At the same time I thought there may be some value in restricting the app to just open stores. Ultimately, I decided to keep closed stores as well, but it may be something I would revisit in a later iteration of the design.

User 4

Male, 24 years old, iPhone user

User 4 loved the simplicity of the app. He described the frustration he's experienced trying to figure out if a store is open. His only comment was that he wanted to know what the app would display if there was no data on a particular store. After some thought, I realized there would in fact be stores that we didn't have data on. So I asked the user if they would want to see stores that had no hours, he replied yes. It made sense to me, and so the yellow pin was born.

User 5

Female, 25 years old, Android user

User 5 had a few interesting ideas. User 5 was the last user I tested the prototype with so, at first she didn't have any suggestions. After pushing her to provide a suggestion, she said it would be cool if there was some sort of drop down when she clicks on the tag which appears on the map. I thought this would clutter the map, and also I thought it would be pretty useless because you can click the blue arrow to view details. I did however compromise and place the "Closes at 11:30pm" text under the tag.