STEP 2

Who are the Competitors?

There is a great variety of apps and sites that offer some version of my app’s functionality; however, the main competitors seem to be the Ski and Snow Report app by SkiReport.com, REI’s Snow Report App, Snowforecast.com’s Snow Forecast app, The Snow Report by North Face. These apps are focused primarily if not entirely on weather and condition reporting, while many others have some similar features but another main focus.

Common Navigation Elements:

All of the competitors provide a fairly similar interface; only Zumobi is different in providing information for multiple resorts simultaneously, in tabs. REI’s app functions by swiping through resorts, but all the others require users to select a location from a list they’ve populated (favorite resorts, etc.). ‘Hamburger’ menus occur in the OnTheSnow and North Face apps, while Zumobi uses a gear-box in the lower left corner for the same purpose. The most frequently occurring ‘extra’ feature is the option to display a trail map of the current resort; only On The Snow lacks this feature.

Common Style Elements

The common stylistic elements are a predominance of whites, greys, and blues in the color schemes, accented with black. The use of blues connotes a wintry/icy feel to the apps,
appropriately enough, but it does raise readability issues – REI sticks with dark greys on white to avoid this. REI and On The Snow use icons – suns, snowflakes, etc, to denote current conditions, while the other two apps use only characters.

**Audience Definition**
The core users group would be skiers and snowboarders; although these people fall into all age ranges, probably the majority would be between 16 (have a driver’s license and able to plan trips) and 60. Most would have smartphones, so the app must be optimized for mobile usage. They will be reasonably tech-savvy and be able and comfortable at least with accessing the app from a laptop or desktop computer.

We can make some assumptions about the audience/users:

a) They have a certain range of disposable income (ski trips are not cheap!)

b) They will want primarily information about resorts within their geographical vicinity

c) A large fraction of users will probably find comparisons of the conditions at various resorts within driving range to be useful.

**Audience Goals**

- Look up the current weather conditions at one or multiple resorts quickly and easily
- See short-term (1 to 3 day) forecasts for resorts
- Easily compare and contrast that information in order to integrate it into their decision-making

**Audience Tasks**

- Find the resort(s) they want information for
- Pull up the current report for that locale
- Compare and contrast multiple locations
- Find short-term forecasts for individual resorts
- Save favorite resorts

**Audience Language**

The language employed in addressing this audience should strive to concisely present the information desired; overly technical language is to be avoided, as is slang or any vague or indeterminate phrasing. The audience will be looking at a large amount of numeric data at a glance and immediate comprehension is the primary goal.

**Personae**
Shawn is a 23-year-old from Uniontown, PA. He works as a manager at the local Arby’s, mostly night shifts, and is planning on going back to school for a degree in Business Administration. Growing up in the Laurel Highlands, he has been snowboarding from an early age. He works long hours and has little time to plan elaborate trips; additionally, he has no internet access from his apartment, but does own an Android smartphone. He is mostly able to snowboard on short notice and must ‘seize the moment’ when conditions are good and he is not working.

Tina is a 47-year-old, originally from Tennessee, who lives in the North Hills of Pittsburgh and works as a high-school math teacher. She and her husband are both downhill skiing enthusiasts and have significant amounts of time off over the winter for holidays (he is a schoolteacher as well). Without children, they are able to take trips frequently and often with little advance notice, so getting up-to-date information is critical.

Website’s Goals and Tasks

The main goal of the website/app is simply to provide information (snow/weather reports for ski resorts) to users in a concise, clear, and simple fashion.

The potential tasks are: searching for a locale, adding it to favorites, selecting a locale from favorites to view, and removing a resort from favorites. This disincludes any mucking about with the app’s settings.

Main Content Categories

The main content category is simply the weather information; navigation will be extremely limited, the options being:

  a) Search for a resort  
  b) Settings  
  c) Favorites

STEP 3

User Stories

Shawn’s coworker asks to trade him shifts for the next day, so he’ll have a Friday night off. His friend Tim has been agitating to go to snowboarding recently, so he texts Tim telling him they can go tomorrow night after all. Shawn needs to get the scoop on what conditions are like at all the regional resorts, but he’ll be working late tonight and then again early in the morning – he doesn’t have time for involved research, since Tim is picking him up immediately after work.

Tina and her husband have been hoping to go skiing for the last couple of weeks, but the weather hasn’t been cooperating. They hear there’s a big cold front coming through the region
overnight, however, and decide that they’ll go out the following day, but they want to wait until
they can check conditions to make a final decision about where.

User Scenarios

Shawn is having a hectic day at work, but he manages to check conditions using the app
installed on his phone. He searches for Seven Springs, Hidden Valley, and Wisp resorts,
successively adding each to his Favorites. After looking at each resort’s data individually, he
selects Favorites in the navigation, where all 3 are listed on one screen with vital statistics for
comparison. After evaluating the data and conferring with his friend Tim, they decide that
conditions at Wisp sound nearly ideal and decide to head there when Shawn is done working.

Tina wakes up early on Saturday morning to find a crisp blanket of snow outside her home in the
North Hills. Elated, she picks up her smartphone from the nightstand, fires up the app, and
scans through all the resorts in a three-hour driving radius (she’s already added them to her
favorites). She and her husband especially like Blue Knob resort, so they’ve decided that unless
conditions are much better elsewhere, they’ll try to make it out there. Scanning her list of
favorites, she sees that Blue Knob has received more snowfall than any other resort on her list,
and determines to go there.
Flowcharts

Flowchart for User Scenario A: Shawn

Flowchart for User Scenario B: Tina