Localify: Local Music Recommendation Application

There are many talented local musicians all around us. By listening to their music and supporting them in the community, you not only encourage the artists to make art, but you also strengthen the local economy by helping small businesses thrive. Unfortunately, it can be difficult for local artists to get their music noticed or have people attend their shows.

Localify.org is an application that aims to bridge the gap between community members and local musicians. It is a student-built, not-for-profit, ad-free, academic-based, locally-focused music artist and event recommendation system. The main goal of the application is to get more people to go see more local shows by more bands at more small venues. We want Localify to help connect people to local artists within their communities.

Localify is designed and developed by students at Ithaca College. It has been in development for the past three years and grew out of a past student project called MegsRadio.fm. The core technology of the system is a machine learning algorithm that recommends local musicians and artists with upcoming events at local venues that are similar to (more mainstream) artists that a user most often listens to on Spotify or other streaming music services.

Localify.org uses best practices from emerging *humane technology* principles to uplift the local music community, help music fans find great local shows, help local artists grow their fan base, and have a positive economic impact on local businesses.The app is available both online and using standalone iOS and Android mobile apps. So far we have had over 500 users try Localify and hope to grow our active user base this coming summer.

Localify was launched in late 2019, but the COVID-19 pandemic largely thwarted live music for much of 2020 and 2021, and as such, made recommending live events not very useful. This downtime gave us a chance to overhaul the local artist recommendation and event recommendation system. This past summer, with live events temporarily returning to communities, Localify.org relaunched and the new recommendation system was deployed. Now that COVID-19 restrictions are loosening, we are excited to

promote Localify to artists and listeners. This spring, a team of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) students is working on a marketing plan for Localify that will be implemented over the summer.

In addition to improving the recommendation algorithm last summer, the frontend user experience was streamlined to encourage a more clear "call to action" for users. We also added a support feature so users can report bugs, significantly sped up the page load time, added an opt-in weekly email digest option, and added a key feature that lets us crowdsource artists origin information.

Our next steps for Localify are to get an Apple Music integration implemented, as well as create a more dynamic search engine. For example, if our search results don't find what a user is looking for, the user can provide us this information so that it can directly be added to our database. This will help provide better quality search results that incorporate community feedback.

We are building Localify because we want to shine a spotlight on local musicians. In addition to their immense talent, these artists play an important role in strengthening communities and improving local economies. Commercial music streaming services (Apple Music, Spotify, YouTube) often overlook less popular local artists which is why we are trying to surface them through music recommendation, event recommendation, and automatic playlist generation. We are proud of the work we have done on Localify and excited to see how it can be used to support local music scenes in the years to come.