

CabCorner to Launch on May 31st

“Cab Sharing” Comes to the Web

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Some people complain about the cost of taxicabs. Jonathan McKinney did something about it.

On Monday, May 31st (Memorial Day), McKinney’s team of social entrepreneurs will rerelease CabCorner.com, a web-based “cab sharing” platform that helps commuters reduce travel costs, street traffic, subway congestion, and urban pollution. He and fellow Wesleyan University alum Jesse Sommer founded the website in late 2008, and are now launching an upgraded version of their original prototype that incorporates input collected from their users and frequent cab riders.

“Our site enhances New York City’s own cab sharing program by taking it to the web and across the country,” McKinney said. “We help people located in the same area find others headed in the same direction. Our site even estimates each travelers’ share of the fare. All they have to do is hail the cab.”

McKinney came up with the idea after facing the prospect of a lonely, expensive ride back to Brooklyn. “Everyone was filtering out of the bars, into cabs, and then on across the bridge,” McKinney recalled. “All that backseat real estate was unoccupied. I thought, ‘There has to be a way to help people connect.’”

Although CabCorner.com is accessible nationwide, it has gained the most traction in New York where the company is headquartered. Chief Operating Officer Sommer now seeks to cultivate greater usage in markets across America. “This economic climate makes lowering travel costs a service that speaks to commuters everywhere,” he said. “And by lowering costs, we’re enabling a whole new segment of society to afford transportation by taxi. If people don’t mind sharing a seat on the bus, why wouldn’t they prefer to ride in style in a cab, alongside a stranger, for the same cost?”

CabCorner has received acclaim for its environmentally-friendly mission, and is praised by both morning commuters and late-nighters on the bar scene. Varun Bihani, CabCorner’s Chief Technology Officer, credits the site’s companion iPhone application with attracting a wide array of user types. “Our technology is versatile,” he said. “Some people plan rides to the airport from their computers several days in advance. Others use mobile phones to find rides headed downtown in the next five minutes. As long as someone is searching for a ‘cab companion’ at that time and location, CabCorner makes the connection.”

“We’re about bringing value to communities,” said Lou Carpino, the Chief Marketing Officer. “Aside from our standard advertising opportunities, we’re delivering customers to our local partners. For example, Sanford’s [a popular diner located in Astoria] offers CabCorner users discounts on its menu. Then we recommend to our users that they meet their fellow travelers outside the diner, and grab something to eat while they wait. Thanks to CabCorner, they have a few extra bucks to spend.”

Ajay Rajani, CabCorner’s Chief Financial Officer and the third Wesleyan alum involved in the project, stresses that CabCorner is a win-win for everyone. “Cabbies can look forward to more business, thanks to the savings we offer our users,” he said. “And in smaller markets with less cab coverage, we’re forging partnerships with livery cab companies to ensure our users can get a taxi. Straight up, CabCorner is good for every player in the process.”