

Sizzle, which three UW Oshkosh students created, had a successful launch over the weekend, which helped spark conversation about the new nightlife app.

Creators, Daniel Brosman, Max Zirbel and Jordan Rhodes, used the popular Oshsnaps account on the Snapchat app to advertise the launch.

“One of our developers of Sizzle knows how to mess with codes so we actually created Oshsnaps as a distribution channel for our launch,” Rhodes said. “So that was the entire purpose of us creating Oshsnaps. And nothing was done manually...but we just created a bot and every snap that came in, it automatically got sent out. And we got 3,000 followers in the matter of a few weeks, which was enough to launch (Sizzle).”

Sizzle had its launch on Saturday, March 14 at local Stitche’s Sports Bar.

“Stitche’s gave us the bar for free that night,” Rhodes said. “They gave us all the booze for free, because we gave away free shots to anyone who downloaded the app, and (the owner) had the busiest Friday he has ever had there.”

Brosman said that since the launch, the number of downloads of the app has been steadily increasing.

“We are at around 850 downloads right now and before the launch we were at 500,” Brosman said.

UWO graduate Ellen Martina who attended the launch of Sizzle, said that she felt that the launch was successful.

“There was a huge turnout and a lot of people were wearing the Sizzle shirts,” Martina said. “I know a large amount of people were downloading the app to check it out.”

Current UWO student Anna Miller said she heard about the launch from social networking on Facebook.

“I saw a few of my friends attending the launch group thing on Facebook and then one for my good friends was an ambassador for the launch party,” Miller said.

Martina said her favorite part of the app is the interactive ability with her Facebook friends.

“My favorite part of the app is being able to see who is planning on going out that night, as well as information about the individual bars,” Martina said. “The app lets the user see drink specials and if there is a cover charge, which I think will be especially helpful in bigger cities like Milwaukee.”

Rhodes said that one thing that differentiates Sizzle from other nightlife apps is the real time technology, which keeps the ranking of different bars up-to-date.

“We created an algorithm that ranks the bars from one to five flames,” Rhodes said. “The ranking is based off of how many people are there, the male to female ratio, how many singles are there and then the price of the drinks. It changes throughout the night and every night.”

Miller said she doesn't use Sizzle consistently, but it is nice to go on and see who is planning on going out and where they are going.

“I actually use it randomly,” Miller said. “I'll just look at it during the week and see how many people are out at the bars.”

Zirbel, Brosman and Rhodes decided that making someone sign in with Facebook in able to access the app would then allow someone's Facebook friends see which bar they are at, but not anyone else.

“Our biggest hurdle was privacy,” Zirbel said. “We don't want it to be a stalker's app,”

Rhodes said he is excited and hopeful for the expansion of Sizzle.

“(Sizzle) has very simple features right now, it just shows you what bars are where and how many people are at the bars and kind of ranks them based on the people there,” Rhodes said. “Eventually though we want to add a 'spark' section which would be a dating part of the app.”

Brosman said that besides fixing the glitches in the app, the next step for Sizzle is to add a built in camera.

“It's anonymous but it will post the picture to the gallery of the bar you are at so if someone is at home they can look and see what's going on,” Brosman said.

Besides expanding the features of the app, they are hoping Sizzle will expand to other universities.

“We actually just met with someone from the University of Tennessee... she's originally from Milwaukee, she's on her spring break, but she's like 'I'm involved with all the fraternities here and all the sororities and the Greek life and I want to spread this as fast as possible',” Rhodes said.

Zirbel said that UWO is not the campus that uses Sizzle the most.

“La Crosse actually has more users of Sizzle than Oshkosh which is pretty crazy,” Zirbel said.

The creators hope that the app will eventually be used by anyone, not just college students.

“We eventually plan to go to bigger cities and plan to target the 22 to 26 age range.”

The Sizzle app can be downloaded for free in the Google Play app store and the Apple app store.

This story was a class assignment