A lifeline for live music lovers

Bandwagon's app makes it easy for gig-goers to find out where live music is playing, reports LEE MEIXIAN

The idea for Bandwagon was born during Chinese-Chan’s final semester in Singapore Management University in April 2011. Mr Chan wanted to put all information on local music performances into one-stop database. He hoped this “cool online music guide for live music” would connect music lovers with music venues, and encourage greater participation in the live music scene.

Online information on gigs to Singapore had been dispersed and mostly available only on individual venues’ websites. He also used to play with an alternative rock band and knew firsthand how difficult it is for musicians to get publicity.

Another reason came from one fun-filled night in Dumisko, Finland in 2009, when he Googled for a jazz club to visit. An hour’s journey in sub-zero temperatures, he found himself shivering before a fishing shop, no trace of music anywhere. “I dreamed of a site that, hey, we need some reliability in this live music search. We can’t just count on these one-off websites giving us information and they don’t even update their sites,” he recalls.

Search engine optimisation that displays places long closed and events long past high up on the list of search results can really mess up people, says Mr Chan, 27, who graduated with first-class honours in economics and business.

His Web app, called Bandwagon, hopes to solve the problem. A researcher updates gig information on the app regularly, so gig-goers can get a snapshot of the live music going on in Singapore on any given day without the hassle of comparing multiple websites.

A Web app, unlike a website which is more static in nature and has limited functionality, allows users to interact dynamically with its interface. The Bandwagon app presently contains a whopping 15,000 pages of information on venues, artists, and gigs.

Mr Chan says he chose the name Bandwagon as a modern take on the 19th-centu-
ry word for a musical event.

The Bandwagon app was launched in October 2011 and the company incorporated at year-end. But Bandwagon only started earning revenue a year later, in November 2012. “For the first 10 to 11 months, we were just surviving on funding,” Mr Chan says.

Development will bring new revenue streams. Mr Chan plans to partner ticketing agencies and add a ticketing feature to his Web app. Each time the app successfully books a gig, it will earn a cut from the ticketing agent’s commission.

The longer run, he also plans to develop a mobile Bandwagon app which would enable the firm to push deal notifications out to app users in the vicinity of music venues. Every promotion claimed would earn Bandwagon a commission.

Mr Chan says he started with no team members, nothing. Then slowly they just started coming together in ways that just amazed me,” he says. He believes they are still around because they share his vision for Bandwagon.

On as an entrepreneur, it is important to have three people about the idea, because you’re doing something new, creating a new value in a field of great scarcity, you need to be able to communicate your idea with team members and get them excited. (Only if there is going to be a cost for them to get involved with you, so there’s better to get certain good density in the vision),” he says.

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