

Executive Summary

CheckInOn.Me

Mission:

**Giving peace of mind and a safety net
to anyone who feels unsafe.**

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The Problem

People often find themselves in situations where they are not sure if they are safe. Examples of potentially unsafe situations include but are not limited to going on blind dates; having contractors at your place of residence; completing a privately-arranged transaction such as a sale made through eBay, Craigslist, or a classified ad; a realtor, insurance agent, or other worker whose job includes visits to strangers at unfamiliar locations; travelling to other cities, states, or countries; and people who live alone or are frequently left alone.

In such cases, if one finds himself or herself in an unsafe situation, there is sometimes no way or opportunity to alert emergency services, friends, or family that help may be needed. Some people have family and friends constantly checking up on them. However, this is inefficient and a nuisance. There are a variety of smartphone apps available, but nearly all are “panic buttons.” During an emergency, the user is expected to unlock his phone, find the app, launch the app, and then hit the panic button. In such an emergency, we suggest just calling 911 rather than fishing through phone apps. In a situation where a user is in grave trouble, and has had her phone taken from her, a phone app requiring launch and activation will not be able to help her.

Additionally, this problem ripples out to the friends, family, and co-workers of the people who experience this vulnerability. They too are looking for peace of mind. Some might wish to feel less responsible for checking on people, and would prefer to only be contacted in case of a potential emergency.

The Solution

CheckInOn.Me is a proactive automated personal safety system solving this problem. After months of development and private testing, CheckInOn.Me launched its MVP on 8 September 2011. Our MVP proved our concept, but people demanded a fun and easy-to-use smartphone app rather than a text messaging system controlled by a web interface. In early 2012, we got to planning the new smartphone-based incarnation.

CheckInOn.Me will check in on a user whenever she wants, and as often as she wants. The user sets up “I’m OK” and “I’m Not OK” code words, and then can either set up a future event when she wants to be checked on, or she can start being checked on a recurring basis with just a few clicks. For example, the user might be walking through a bad neighborhood, and might want to be checked every 5 minutes until she feels safe, and shuts it off.

Upon each check-in, CheckInOn.Me is looking for one of the code words, alone or in sentences. If there is no reply after a certain amount of time, or the emergency code word is received, CheckInOn.Me sends notifications to the friends and family the user confirmed and selected in our system. The app will grab a user's GPS and location details every ten minutes, and store it on our cloud. This means that even if the user is unconscious or separated from her phone, we can be contacting her friends with everything we know about where she is and what she's doing.

The smartphone app will map everybody (the user and her contacted friends), and will open a live chat for contacted friends. They can then determine who is close by, and how to get help, if it's needed.

CheckInOn.Me also has an "SOS" feature. When activated, we wait a few minutes, and then call. There is nobody on the other end of the phone, but the user can use this call to pretend some emergency is happening somewhere, and she has to leave this date, or he has to leave this high school party. We are often asked if this feature can be used for business meetings; it can.

Target Audiences

CheckInOn.Me's target audience is anybody looking for a personal safety net. We are targeting activities, lifestyles, and jobs where people are often meeting with strangers and/or going into strange neighborhoods. Our "lowest hanging fruit" are four main groups of people:

- Online dating: Online and blind dates with people who are essentially strangers.
- Real estate: Realtors, property managers, landlords, and apartment brokers.
- Travel: Flight attendants, tour guides, off-hours mass transit, people on exchange programs, "couch surfers" and vacation renters, and individuals on personal or business travel.
- College students, especially women.

Outside of these, there are many jobs that require workers to meet with strangers in the workers' homes, at their offices, or on other sites. Sole practitioners may feel especially vulnerable. This target group includes insurance adjusters; counselors, therapists, and social workers; massage therapists; language translators; consultants; temporary workers; and retail workers walking to their cars or transit late at night.

We are also targeting the elderly, infirm, and high school and college kids. The elderly and infirm may feel self-conscious by friends and family checking on them frequently, or they might wish that they were checked on more often. They may also feel too proud to wear LifeAlert, which is only effective if you are conscious to press the button to call for help. As high school and college kids go to parties and spread their social wings, they may not want Mommy calling every 15 minutes to make sure they're OK.

CheckInOn.Me can check on them, and only alert Mommy, sorority sisters, or friends if something seems to be wrong.

There are many situations in which CheckInOn.Me can supply a safety net to both people involved in a situation or transaction:

- Taxi driver and passenger.
- Buyer and seller meeting in person to complete a Craigslist or eBay transaction.
- Contractor, housekeeper, personal assistant, or “task performer” (TaskRabbit.com) and the resident or individual who purchased the service.
- “Couch surfer,” vacation renter, or Airbnb sub-lessee, and the person supplying the couch or space, who might stay/live there while the visitor is staying there.
- Travelers and their “travel exchange” hosts (Tripping.com).
- Realtor and potential home buyer (also property agent and potential renter).
- Blind date.

Technology

CheckInOn.Me customers are served using our cloud-based system, which connects to our smartphone app. Our app is currently available for Android only and is entering public alpha in August 2012. We will then continue building features, fixing any bugs, and iterating based on user feedback. Once our Android app is in full release, we will make a matching iPhone app, which we expect to release in late 2012.

As our app cannot address every user and use case, we are developing an API. This will allow everyone from developers at hackathons to programmers at large corporations to integrate some or all of our features in web and mobile apps. Businesses like realties will be able to better retain employees who feel safer. Web-based businesses like travel and dating sites will be able to see more usage from customers who feel safer.

Opportunity

In of December 2010, there were nearly 303 million wireless accounts in the US, which means that approximately 96% of the country has a cell phone [http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/research/index.cfm/aid/10323]. Over 26% of US users have disconnected their landlines, and rely solely on their mobile phones. More than 296,000 calls are made each day from a mobile phone to 911.

Smartphone adoption in the USA is currently over 50%, and is rising quickly among all age groups.

The opportunity is not just in the USA. Our API allows people around the world to make any flavor of our system they choose, including regional versions. We are already in talks with a funded American company that has a dating website in India with over 4 million members. The CEO loves our idea, and is considering building our checking into the first version of their mobile app.

Competition

In order to “solve” personal safety, an app or system must achieve two things. One, it must be proactive. If it waits for you to be able to use the system during an emergency, ie: if it’s “reactive,” you may be unable to activate it, and it may fail to get you help. Two, it must be as-close-to-impossible-as-possible to disengage. If an attacker can end or block your call for help, the safety system is useless.

The closest competition for CheckInOn.Me falls into two categories: personal monitoring systems and phone apps.

Personal monitoring systems include LifeAlert and OnStar. Both require special installations in your home or vehicle, and then a monthly or annual fee for monitoring. Both will precisely determine your location and what type of emergency you are having, and send the appropriate services to your location. Both have live staff who speak with you about your situation. LifeAlert requires you to be conscious and in your home as you do not get help unless you press a button. It’s reactive, as is their new smartphone app, which is just a large button that speed dials LifeAlert.

OnStar claimed 2 million subscribers in 2010, and is forecasting 7.9 million subscribers in 2017 [<http://www.isuppli.com/automotive-infotainment-and-telematics/news/pages/gms-onstar-to-tally-9-million-subscribers-in-2017.aspx>]. The US sold approximately 15 million cars in the 2011 calendar year. This means that less than 5% of auto buyers are likely to be OnStar customers.

Neither LifeAlert nor OnStar can check on you or get you help while you are riding the mass transit late at night, at a convention out of town, or meeting a new client in his home.

There are many phone apps available for iOS and Android devices. The best known is Guardly, a Toronto company that recently received \$2M in funding. Nearly all of these phone apps are panic buttons, and nearly all focus on the use case of, “What if you got attacked right now.” If you think you are in trouble, you need to activate the app in some manner. The app then does a variety of things from taking photos and recording video to texting friends, calling 911 for you, or sounding a loud alarm siren.

The Guardly website explains how you can use their system while you are being followed by a “pursuer.” The process Guardly describes is illogical for someone who is truly terrified and in imminent danger of attack. The potential victim should be calling 911, and getting to safety, possibly running. It’s unlikely that while being terrified, running, and trying to get away from a pursuer that the victim will be swiping through her phone for an app so she can wait for the countdown to call 911, shoot pictures, and text her friends.

Guardly is not going to alert your friends or get you any help if you are unconscious, dropped your phone, or had your attacker take your phone away. Additionally, loud alarms are seen as an easily-ignored nuisance, not as a cry for help that makes neighbors snap into hero mode.

Similar, SafetyGrid.net’s website tells you that there are scenarios in which calling 911 “may not be your best option.” They list choking, assault, and terrorist attack as some of these scenarios. We can’t imagine why you would delay calling 911 in any serious situation. We also can’t imagine how someone who is being choked would unlock her phone, swipe around to find SafetyGrid, launch the app, and then hit the panic button.

We see these “competitors” as potential licensees for our API. But while they are neither proactive nor difficult to disengage, they are not solving personal safety.

Our Strengths and Competitive Advantage

CheckInOn.Me is everywhere your smartphone is. If your phone is out of your possession, our proactive checking can still alert friends and family that you may be in trouble.

CheckInOn.Me can easily grow and expand the feature set. We have a small but dedicated team here in the USA. My CTO/Tech Co-Founder is an American programmer living in Las Vegas. We have two additional programmers as part of the Las Vegas team.

The Founder, Debbie Levitt, works full time on CheckInOn.Me. Debbie’s background is UX/UI, web design, natural online behavior, branding, marketing, and usability, typically working on SaaS, marketplaces, and eCommerce. She has also doing mobile interaction design for Sony Ericsson and Wells Fargo. Debbie invented this system in 2009 when she was single, living alone, and wanted a mobile way for friends to check that she was safe. This business is her passion.

Debbie filed a provisional patent in April 2011, and the full patent in April 2012.

We also have a great, memorable, and easy-to-spell name that is not real Latin, fake Latin, or common words with missing vowels or “z” where “s” would be.

And we are still the only personal safety system that is truly proactive and nearly impossible to disengage. As our system is counting down time, waiting for you to enter one of your code words, it cannot be disengaged or cancelled. A lack of response will still trigger our emergency response.

Monetization

CheckInOn.Me makes money two main ways: API licensing and monthly subscription fees for customers. The current plan is to have the smartphone app as a free download, and then free for two months to hook customers. After that, we are looking at charging around \$3.99 per month as a recurring subscription. There will also be a slightly discounted annual fee available. Our pricing is not in stone, but is based on Guardly charging \$1.99 per month or \$19.99 per year.

As we have just launched, we do not yet have data on adoption or paying customers. Customer adoption will rely on our marketing and PR efforts, as well as being found in application marketplaces. The app will be viral in that when we confirm friends for our user, we will push them to download the app so that they can get emergency notifications through the app.

Adoption of the API relies mostly on partnerships. Funding would be used build our team, evangelize our API, and continue developing our products. We can also monetize the API as other companies and developers create private label versions, versions in other languages, or integrate our platform into an existing service, such as a travel website.

The more people use CheckInOn.Me, the more uses they will find for it. A woman who uses it while online dating may use it when she is a stay-at-home Mom, nervous about all those knocks on the door.

Funding Ask and Use of Money

CheckInOn.Me is seeking \$500,000 in investment. This will be used over for our next 12 months' milestones.

CheckInOn.Me does not require a large team, nor do we require manufacturing, warehousing, R&D, or typical business logistics. As a software company, CheckInOn.Me would use the investment to build our team, attract API partners, and further develop our products.

Examples of potential, large (potential) API partnerships include:

- Integrating checking into the OKCupid dating app, which already lets you “meet now” with locals.
- Creating a “Re/Max” version of the app that can be deployed to all real estate agents under the Re/Max umbrella.
- Working with sororities on a pilot program on select campuses. Then deploying our version or a private labeled version for all chapters of that sorority.
- Integration of CheckInOn.Me into a travel service like TripIt, who could easily add “check-ins” around various planned aspects of a personal or business trip.

The most likely exit is for CheckInOn.Me to be acquired in 2-3 years by a company in telecom, communications, online dating, travel, personal organization (calendar), safety, or security.

Funding Already Received

The initial start-up expense of CheckInOn.Me was bootstrapped. Development and initial marketing has cost (so far) approximately \$15,000.

Hub Ventures invested \$20,000 in April 2012 when we joined their Spring 2012 incubator class. Out of 209 applications, CheckInOn.Me was one of seven companies chosen for the cohort.

At the end of the incubator program, Lakeland Ventures Development, a strategic partner to Hub Ventures, became the first seed investor in our round. We have a \$50,000 note with them, and are seeking follow-on investors.

CheckInOn.Me can be found on Angel List and Gust.

Thank you for your interest and consideration.