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Case Study - Wayfinding in complex buildings without reliable GPS

Palmerston North Hospital



Situation

MidCentral DHB is the major hospital servicing Palmerston North and the surrounding area, with a population base of around 175,000 people. Every day the hospital serves around 300 admitted patients, 750 outpatient appointments, 100 emergency department cases and 600 visitors.

The hospital was looking for a mobile app that would help patients and visitors to navigate their way around the hospital, find their way to appointments, wards, rooms and facilities. A particular challenge is that the large concrete building blocked effective GPS and cellular reception, rendering traditional location services unreliable. Another failing of GPS is that it is not able to accurately position a person within a multi floor scenario.



“Innovation is challenging for a DHB but MidCentral made a step by creating a Wayfinding App to improve how Patients and Visitors plan and find there way in the hospital. A major advantage for the hospital is less missed appointments.”

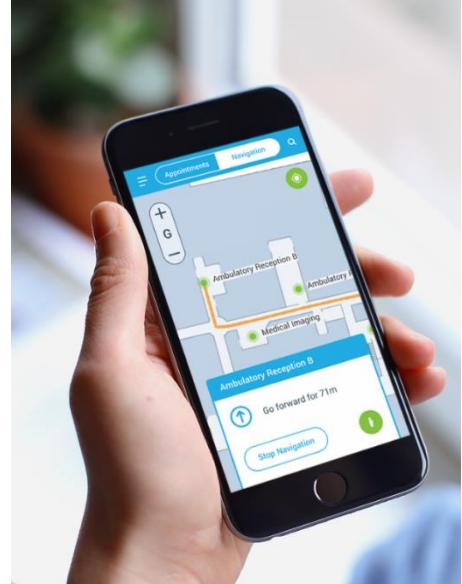
Roeland deVries, Project Manager



Solution

MidCentral selected the Umajin App Creator to build a native mobile app. The main focus of the app is to provide a detailed multi floored map, along with a wayfinding solution for 26 key destinations. The wayfinding provides a recommended route, path descriptions and even includes path correction if a wrong turn is made. The system works without reliance on GPS by using Bluetooth beacons.

As well as the mapping and wayfinding, the app also provides users with the ability to create appointments and set reminders and alerts. There is also general information about the hospital and the key destinations for appointments.



Highlights

- Native app running on both iOS and Android smartphones, integrated with Bluetooth beacons
- Onboarding process that shows users how to operate the app on their first run
- GPS enabled city map helps new visitors navigate their way to the hospital campus
- Over 100 beacons installed throughout the hospital supporting the wayfinding solution
- Self locating map tiles that range through increasing levels of detail and position starting with a high level campus map, then changing focus to a detailed floor map as users enter the building.
- Floor map automatically changes as users are detected on one of the buildings 7 levels.

“MidCentral is excited by the potential of Umajin. We see opportunity to empower internal teams to create content, digital processes and native mobile apps in response to business challenges. Umajin has combined power and simplicity.”

Roger McEwen, Innovation Manager



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