Leo Liu is helping local communities connect with the launch of Alohop

When you're looking for something to do - whether for a date, a special occasion, or just a weekend out with friends - Google is typically the first stop. Unfortunately, a simple Google search for "things to do near me" will churn out thousands of unfiltered and unhelpful results, making the simple task of finding a way to spend your time a tedious and dreadful one.

Leo Liu

Leo Liu experienced this frustrating predicament dozens of times while living in Boston, and through conversations with friends, realised that many people were in the same boat as he was. After a conversation with his friend and future co-founder, James Pratama, Liu decided they needed to do something about it, and they began building Alohop.

Alohop is an online platform that curates high-quality experiences from local creators in one place. Instead of mindlessly scrolling event calendars and media articles for hours, users can now use Alohop as a one-stop shop for discovering and booking fun experiences in Boston, all while helping to develop the local experience creator economy.

Liu designed Alohop with quality in mind. It isn't a dumping ground for outdated and poorly-run events. Instead, every experience featured on Alohop is rigorously checked for quality and incorporates reviews from those who actually attended the event as a means of social proof. The Alohop curation team personally tests each experience before it is added to the platform. The site is easy to navigate, which helps customers spend less time deciding, and more time enjoying these experiences.

Liu is no stranger to consolidating multiple data sources and using technology to package that data in an easily digestible way. Prior to Alohop, Liu supported DataRobot's office of the CEO as a software engineer in parsing through endless data regarding Covid-19, putting it into a format that was easy to understand. He used over 10 different data sources from institutions such as John Hopkins and the *New York Times* to create a Covid-19 prediction tool that allowed policymakers to make more informed decisions in a timely manner.

Connecting local people with experiences in their area may seem much different than dealing with healthcare data models and predictive analytics, but Liu employs many of the same foundational skills that he mastered at DataRobot at Alohop. As

the technical architect of Alohop, Liu manages a team of software developers, orchestrating the culmination of "data" (experiences) into a digestible format that is easy to navigate and take action on.

The experience market is extremely fragmented, making it hard to find different experiences within different niches, but Alohop's seamless design - thanks to Liu and his team - does all the heavy lifting.

When Liu was a child, his family moved to a new city to start a furniture business. Although he was young, being able to see the development of that business venture firsthand instilled foundational business and problem-solving skills in him. He got a crash course in what it means to own a business, and how to navigate the never-ending challenges that come with entrepreneurship.

Liu met Pratama when they were just freshmen at Babson college, and after graduation they went on to work together at DataRobot. The duo was constantly trying to find new things to do in Boston, and they realised how difficult it was to make new friends and develop new hobbies as adults. Alohop solved their own social woes and helped small creators in the Boston area get a leg up. It's a tool they both wish had existed years ago, and now, they enjoy the platform just as much as their other users. People are always on the lookout for a way to build their rolodex of memories, and Alohop serves as an impactful solution to that problem.

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