# netSnow

## Group Communication App for Skiers/Snowboarders

UC Berkeley
CS160 Spring 2011
User Interface Design

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## Problem

When a group goes to the snow, they usually will split up for different reasons such as varying skill levels, riding preferences, or just getting separated. When this happens, communication among the group becomes disjoint and very difficult. And it becomes more cumbersome and ineffective when you factor in other conditions on the slopes: wearing gloves, when the person you are calling is going down the slopes, when you want to get in touch with multiple people, etc.

## Solution

Our app provides skiers and snowboarders with a better way to handle group functionalities while on the slopes. netSnow acts as a central point of communication with group messaging, mobile geo-locating, and one-touch dialing to help group members effortlessly stay in contact throughout the day.
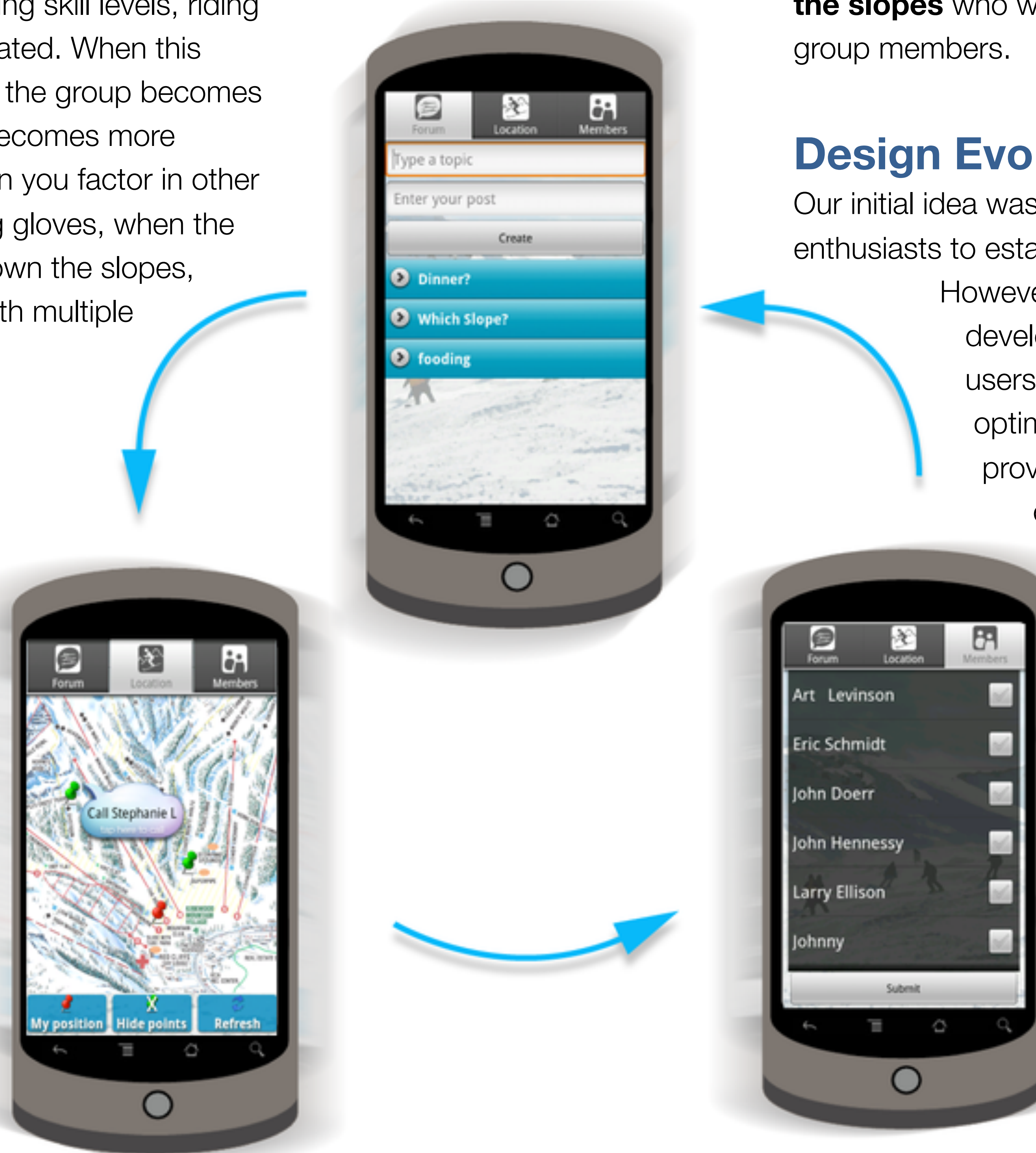
## Target User Group

Our target users are groups of **ski/snowboarders on the slopes** who want to easily communicate with their group members.

## Design Evolution

Our initial idea was to provide a space for local snow-enthusiasts to establish outings to the mountains. However, through the iterations, our app developed into something more useful to users while at the mountain, so as to optimize mobile functionalities. Instead of providing an app that allows users to find others and plan ski trips, we provide users with a tool for communication **during** their ski trip while the group is at the ski resort.

In addition, many aspects and tasks of our interface were simplified to allow users easier interaction. A tabbed interface was adopted so users could quickly access the main functions of our app and buttons and fonts were enlarged where possible.

The Forum tab allows users to broadcast messages to all group members. The Location tab shows the GPS locations of the user and group members on the trail map. The Members tab shows member info and provides quick buttons to call or locate each of them. In the touch-free mode, shaking the device allows a user to rotate through the tabs. So a user can locate members in the Location mode and view new messages in the Forum mode without having to remove their gloves.

## Final Prototype
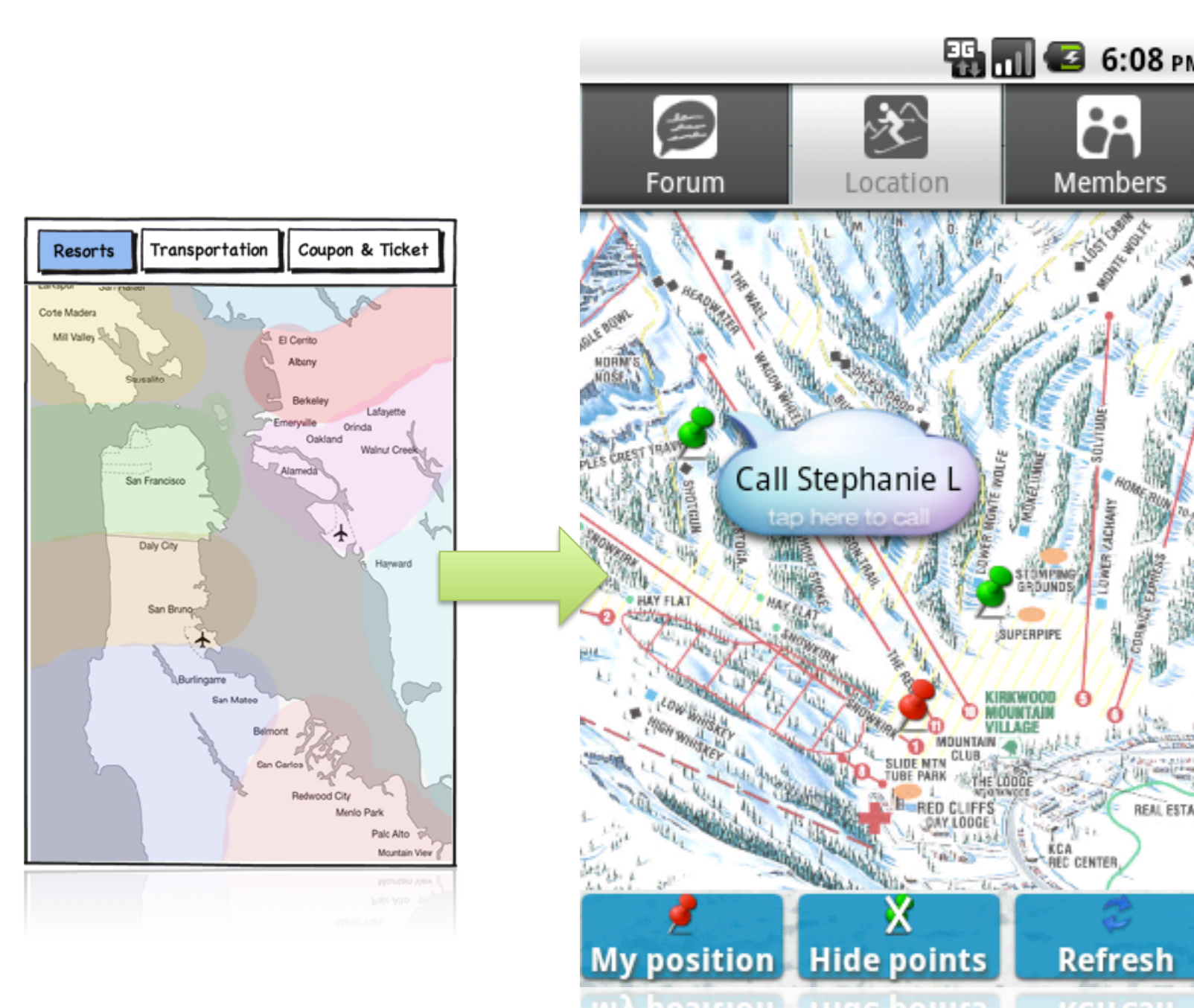
Our **final prototype includes** the following features:

• Quickly invite members through your phone's contacts.
• Communicate with other members through the Forum.
• Locate yourself and group members on the trail map.
• One-touch dialing via the Members or Location tabs.
• Touch-free navigation through the main tabs.

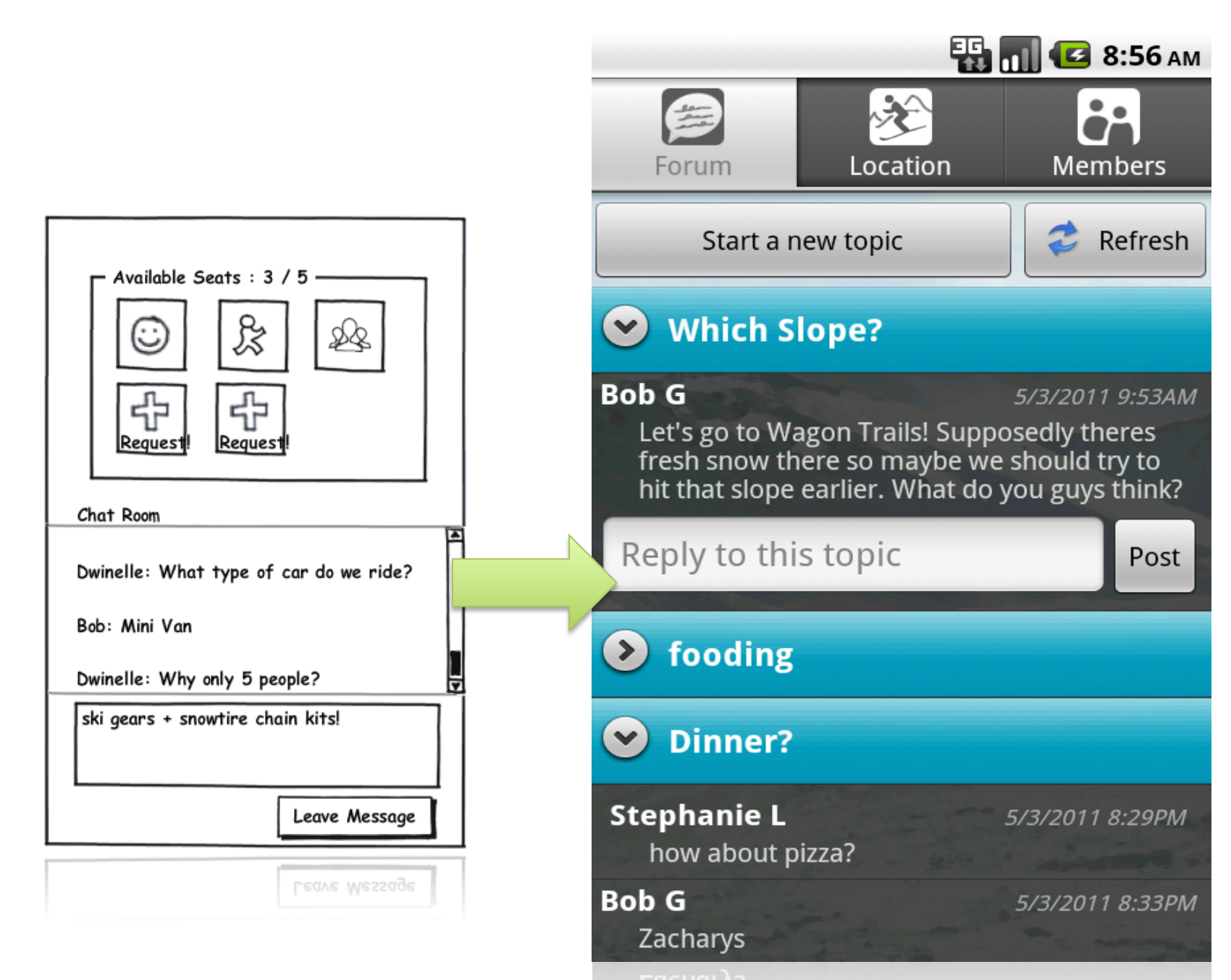Potential **new features** and future development include:

• Improved GPS location mapping and accuracy.
• Private messaging between members and better notifications.
• Public, social and location-based groups.
• Further gloved mode support (scrolling with accelerometer, voice commands, etc.)

Buttons and fonts were enlarged so users can see and tap buttons more easily. Also we replaced username/password sign-in with a simpler phone number based sign-in.

The map evolved from a regular street map to a trail map of the ski resort. Using GPS, it displays the user's position with a red pin as well as other members' positions with green pins.

We changed from event details and chat room page to a central forum in which the user can post new topics or reply to existing posts, which are broadcast to all group members.