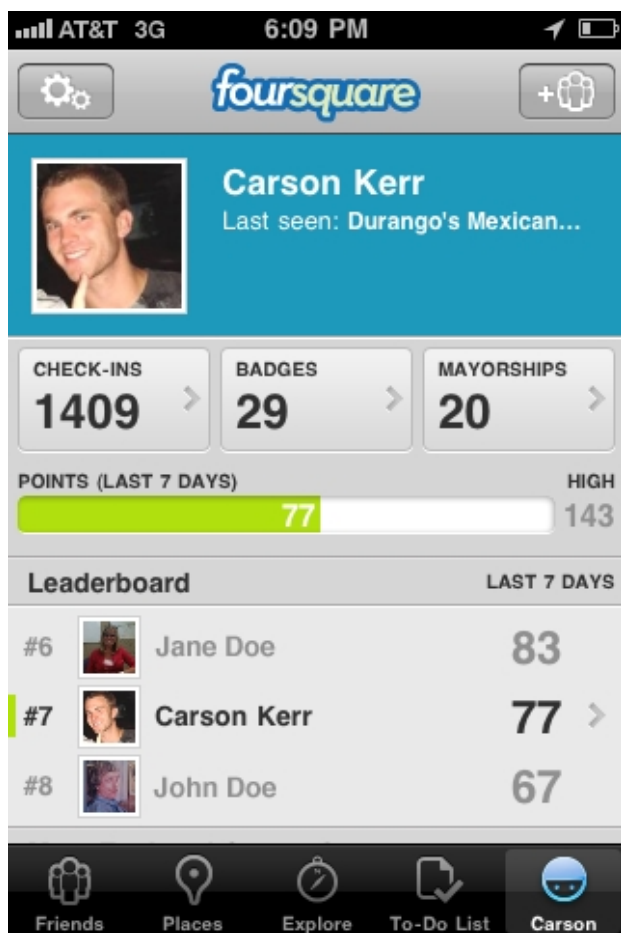


Foursquare™ for Travel

Written by Carson Kerr

Thursday, 24 March 2011 13:14 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 August 2011 09:44

By now, we've all heard of [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#). With the significant promulgation of mobile technology and "smart phones" equipped with GPS devices,



there has emerged a new dimension to connecting with people: a spatial element. At a very basic level, we connect virtually, by messaging or writing on each other's "wall" on [Facebook](#) for instance. The next time a friend logs in to the giant social network, they receive a notification that you were thinking of them and they can choose to respond or "like" your interaction.

Then came real time interactions, which added a temporal element, almost an urgency, to social connectivity online. On [Twitter](#), as people express themselves by tweeting in a meeting or while at lunch, their followers are alerted to the short 140 character message or "tweet" immediately and can choose to respond or expound upon the ideas in the previous "tweet."

As mentioned before, the widespread use of mobile technology and harnessing the power of global positioning satellites has allowed for social networking sites to add location-based services for their users. One site that is principally built on the use of this technology is [Foursquare](#).

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Foursquare users, “check-in” to different venues around their city. Once checked in, a ping notification is sent to friend’s mobile devices. From here friends can then see where their friends are in real-time and can then choose to comment on the “check-in.” Users compete in a giant ongoing worldwide competition for:

- Points (you get them for each check in)
- Mayorships (not in the sense that we are used to, but the person who has checked into a single venue the most of anyone in a most recent two-month period)
- Badges (awarded by companies and Foursquare itself for performing certain feats i.e. a Barista badge, for checking in to five different Starbucks locations)

Businesses, both small and large, are capitalizing on this free exposure and are awarding discounts to those that check in or are “Mayor” at their location and provide proof. A single “check-in” means immediate exposure to all of their friends on Foursquare. If they have this account connected to both Twitter and Facebook, this means that potentially hundreds, if not thousands of people with whom this person is connected, essentially witness the “check-in.” The physics and rules of Foursquare have huge implications for travel, and harnessing both the power of the [Foursquare](#) network and of your smart phone’s capabilities can turn ordinary travel into a game. It’s like living a video game!

Capitalizing on these powerful location-based tools requires precise spatial and temporal measuring devices and smart phones. iPhone™, Android™ and Blackberry™ are certainly up to the task. As these devices become more and more common and as major wireless providers improve and grow in coverage, incorporating Foursquare into your trip may be very feasible. Imagine earning a badge for every new country or territory you entered, or becoming the “Mayor” of the Eiffel Tower while studying abroad in France. The spatial element definitely adds a new dimension to the world of travel, one of competition, pride and proof of one's journeys. It also makes a mundane trip to the grocery store a little more bearable when you know you are one “check-in” away from becoming the “Mayor.” It’s good to be “Mayor,” if just for the bragging rights, but what if the supermarket knocked an extra 20% off your \$200 grocery bill? Not too shabby.

If you would like to learn more about [Foursquare](#) and how you could use it as a powerful recreational tool in your travels, [contact me](#)
or visit

support.foursquare.com

. To learn about the risks and decide if Foursquare is right for you, visit pleaserobme.com