In partnering with UFF, we have created a working website which is being actively updated. Foundational features built into the site include:

➢ An interactive map of all harvesters on our team
➢ Information about the foundation
➢ Shipping operations
➢ Along with a growing education section where people can;
  ○ Learn how to prepare seafood
  ○ Find recipes
  ○ Understand the fishing industry and what it takes to be a harvester

Currently, harvesters included on the site span as far north as Machias, with the furthest inland being Waterville. As a new and growing operation, the current focus species are lobsters and crabs. Additional Maine fisheries including oysters, clams, shrimp, mussels, herring and a variety of others will be included in the future.

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Through our partnership with United Fishermen Foundation (UFF) we have created and published a working and interactive online platform to bring harvesters directly to the public. The availability of this site provides fresh seafood to Maine consumers supporting local economies while educating and empowering harvesters to “take the wheel.” The site highlights:

➢ Harvesters available to the public via the interactive, ‘live’, google map
➢ Public education, such as a ‘cookbook’ section and a general knowledge or background section.
➢ Our group was tasked with the creation of a logo for the site, which possible retail items (i.e. sweatshirts, hats, gear, etc.) may contain in the future.
➢ Cuts out the middleman, therefore increasing profits for the local harvesters and often decreasing cost for the consumer.
➢ Provides the public with a face for the people who harvest and work for the food they consume.
➢ Allows for a more “shop local” approach

The local communities, local economies, and hard working fishermen are foreseen to benefit a great deal from this project, and already have.

The UFF website is a foundational tool which supports local businesses in Maine, while connecting them with local consumers. Commercial harvesters are often overlooked as beneficiaries of the profits made through seafood sales, especially when dealing with large corporations. However, through this platform, harvesters and consumers are able to have a more individualized and personal experience while keeping money within the local economy. This platform focuses on empowering harvesters and educating small scale businesses on how to achieve goals both locally, and abroad. Also, by injecting continuous sales into the local economy, small businesses will be able to thrive off of and support one another.

We extend our thanks to Dr. Aly McKnight our wonderful professor, as well as the president of United Fishermen Foundation, Sam Martin, and the founder, Ali Farrell.

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Bait shortage and subsequent skyrocket in bait prices
Fluctuating demand, lack of market security
As well as most recently, COVID-19
Changing fishery regulations (Right Whale conservation)

Harvesters need to form direct connections to their consumers to re-establish relationships, profit, and livelihood. The aim is to connect the consumer directly to the harvester, leaving out the “middleman”. Prior to our work, this need was being met through a Facebook group but was due for transition to a more consolidated platform.

In recent years the Maine fishing economy has been devastated by multiple factors:

➢ Bait shortage and subsequent skyrocket in bait prices
➢ Fluctuating demand, lack of market security
➢ As well as most recently, COVID-19
➢ Changing fishery regulations (Right Whale conservation)

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The University of Maine has also reached out to us, expressing interest in incorporating our data and website onto their own.