Foursquare: Explained

Foursquare is a location-based social network where you “check in” to your favorite locations and let your friends know where you are. Foursquare has deeper purposes than just location sharing with friends, though. Many restaurants and stores will reward loyalty and frequent check-ins with specials and deals.

How Foursquare Works
In order to use Foursquare, you must have a GPS or Internet enabled phone. Once you are in a location - for example, Bobst Library - you can “check in” to Foursquare and let your friends know where you are.

Points & Badges
Foursquare operates on a rewards system. Every time you check into a location, you receive points. If you are checking into a place for the first time, you earn more points. If you check in with a friend, you earn even more points. The points don’t actually amount to anything except a friendly competition among your friends and the bragging rights of being on top. Foursquare does award you badges based on frequent activities (for example, there is a “cinephile” badge for people who have checked into a movie theater ten or more times).

Mayorships
The height of glory and fame involved in Foursquare are the coveted Mayorships. You can be mayor of any location on Foursquare, although some are more lucrative than others. Being the mayor can sometimes come with perks more than the mayorship itself - some businesses will give free things (food, drinks, prizes) to the Mayor of their establishment - inciting competition and encouraging people to return to claim the title.

“But I don’t want people knowing my business!”
Don’t worry. Your Foursquare check-ins are completely private and only will be shared with people that you approve. And, as an extra measure, each time you check-in to a location you are given the option to share the check-in with friends on Foursquare. Those who do want to share also have the option of broadcasting the check-in on Facebook and Twitter.

Tips & To-Dos
A popular function of each location is the opportunity to leave a tip. For example, if you checked-in to the Kimmel World Marketplace, you might leave a tip to go to the pasta line and say hello to Robert. You can turn anyone’s tip into a “to-do” item and the next time you are wondering what to get at Kimmel, you will have a reminder in your Foursquare account. This is a great opportunity for NYU departments to leave their own tips for visitors - a quick “did you know” or “come say hello to the Vice President of Student Affairs.”

Lists
One way to increase FourSquare presence and user engagement is by creating lists of places related to one another, such as campus dining halls or favorite stores. To create a list, visit your profile online at foursquare.com/user and click the Me tab, click “Create a List” and give your list a name (such as “Favorite Study Spots on Campus” or “Best Greenwich Village Coffee Shops”). Once it’s created, type in the search bar and click to add venues, tips and photos for your list and when you’re done, click “Finished Editing” on the top right of your screen. To edit your list at anytime, click on the title of the list and then on “Edit.” Lists can be shared on Twitter and Facebook, and they will also appear to users that check-in to places on the list.