GROUP TBD

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

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THE PROBLEM

The problem is that there is a lack of accessible information on where to donate items to nonprofits. Often times when people donate their items they are donating to an organization that either resells these items or throws them away. It is hard to find organizations in a particular area that will take the items and give them directly to someone who needs them. This introduces us to our need statement:

People need a way to connect to appropriate organizations that will donate their items directly to those who need them.

EXISTING COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Some communities have attempted to solve this problem by reducing waste and giving back to the community. There are numerous blogs on the internet that suggest alternative options to donating to re-sell organizations, but none that are location specific. There is a grassroots nonprofit called Free Cycle where members of the community (usually in a city) can post offers or needs. These offers are items people no longer want that they are giving away for free. Another organization that is popular is the Buy Nothing Project, where there is a facebook group per city that is solely dedicated to giving away items for free. The problem with organizations like Free Cycle and the Buy Nothing Project is that these organizations rely on whether people in the community want the items and there is no time guarantee of if or when the items will leave your possession.

OUR SOLUTION

Our solution is to create an app that acts as a platform to connect people and nonprofits. The app will allow users to find an appropriate organization to donate their items and easily help other who may be in need.

THE TECH

The app will allow users to upload a picture of the items they're looking to donate and a description. With this information, the app will connect them to the appropriate nonprofits in need of these items. We will use AI to screen the images to make sure uploads are appropriate and to see if the items are in good condition. An additional feature of our app is an organization page. This page will allow for nonprofit organizations and charities to connect to the community by having an information page listing items they need, the services they provide, and other ways people can get involved. We will use a tracking feature to reflect how much someone has given back to the community through their donations. It will consist of a symbol, like a tree, that will grow as they donate to illustrate your impact in the community.

SIMILAR TECH

The only tech similar to our solution that we were able to find was an app based in the United Kingdom called Gone for Good. Gone for Good was an app that UK residents use to upload their gently used clothes and household goods to charity. Their process is similar to ours. You start by taking a picture and uploading the image of the item, answering a few short questions, and then the app would match the item with an appropriate charity. The user could select to drop the item off at the charity or schedule a pickup time. This app seems to be no longer be running. Many articles about the app came out in 2016 and the latest post on their social medias (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) were in 2019. In addition to their lack of social media updates their website link is a dead end and the app is no longer available on the google play store.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for our app is the Athens community, specifically nonprofits in Athens. We are going to advertise this app to Athens' residences. Once we have the app developed, the next step will be to expand the audience and the app's functionality to anywhere. We want this app to be available to as many people as possible, since there is no shortage of organizations to donate to. We will start out with the United States will expand to interested countries as demand suggests.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONS

A feature we will add if time allows is a tax feature. Since we are an app that deals with donations, we are considering having a tax deduction section. It would contain an image upload tool for the donation receipt that uses AI to scan the date, the donation organization, and the tax deductible amount. After the receipt is uploaded there will be a text summary of the donation information. When it is time to file taxes the app will send you a notification and instructions on how to file your tax deductions.

Another feature we would love to add is a listing of "drop-off sites" around Athens. The purpose of these sites would be to allow residents a way to donate to an organization without having to drive to them. Before we could implement this we would need our app to get off the ground. Drop-off sites would need us to get volunteers, a collection vehicle, and organizations to give to.

SOURCES

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.reasondigital.goneforgood&hl=en_US&gl=US

https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/gone-for-good

https://greatnonprofits.org/city/athens/GA

https://business.athensga.com/list/category/non-profit-organizations-236850

https://freecycle.org/

https://buynothingproject.org/

https://imperfectidealist.com/where-to-donate-clothes-besides-goodwill/

https://homecleaningfamily.com/where-to-donate-clothes/