Trans Housing App Ideas

Peer-to-peer / crowd-sourcing support for transgender people in crisis [who often are unable to access or experience dangerous conditions in traditional resources].

Proof of concept: already successful on smaller scales, such as http://www.transhousingnetwork.com/ . Existing systems suffer from inefficiency/difficulty in finding matches for one's situation/location and from not being widely known about.

Core: dynamic map- visual, a la google maps, with markers of individuals able to offer or in need of housing (+ areas people have volunteered as able to provide transport or buddy volunteering over), with radiuses/area of travel distance
    +   account system

Creates housing needed and available housing location markers==>
        users specify ability to travel or help travel distance
        => this appears as low-opacity radius around marker
OTHER volunteers-- people who can help transport a trans person in need of transport to houser--> also have these areas/routes on map

so user type indicators:
        => in need of housing
                => stretch goal feature: extreme weather conditions trigger possible emergency status for those on the streets in eg dangerously freezing temps? -> alerts can go out, possible connection to motel-booking sites so long-distance people can help by buying a room for the person
        ==> (volunteer-- can be in various/multiple categories)
                => offering housing
                => offering transport
                    -?> rideshare arrangement system?
                => available as a "buddy" for anyone accepting a housing or transport offer, to check out the location with them or go along on the trip, to increase safety
                        -+> to check in on them / be available for support if person thinks they may need an exit strategy
                =?> besides housing, able to offer food or other necessities (toiletry, etc) to youth in need of these items-- even shower?
                        => homeless/etc users can list what items/services they may need? (food, toothbrush, shower, etc...)
                                => [info point] Donating these items to youth in your area who need them can be critical in their ability to pass a job interview, their physical health or even survival, and their mental health in a traumatic time-- knowing that there are people who would support them / care about them

=?> [likely too far tangential] fellow trans people willing to meet / provide social support?

Matches:
    + system can automatically deduce potential matches to contact based on connected travel distances
        => ideal world, even connect to amtrak/other public transport for calculating travel possibilities -- somewhat implemented in google maps already... connection possible?
    +? users can add potential matches into a sort of "cart" area, and save carts
        - easy ways to compare potential housers? housees? considering options
    + contact requests go to internal site messages and external email alerts / (auto phone/texts?)

user accounts & privacy:
    + essential info, like listed in trans housing network
        NEED OF HOUSING USERS:
            - available budget of housee for rent, necessities (ie able to provide for self)
            - reason for need of shelter (eviction, financial difficulty, family rejection, etc)
            - custom anchor point (eg job) & radius distance able to be away from that point, / able to travel/relocate how far?
            - pets (own or allergies)
            - etc, etc
        HOUSERS / RESOURCE PROVIDERS:
            - nature/amount of available space/slots
            - time available (+ hard/fuzzy dates on either end of span)
            - ? describe your knowledge of / experience with transgender people
    + ? fillable profile questions in Get To Know Your Potential House[e/r] section? (hobbies, etc -- harmless personal info can build empathy)
            - pets (own or allergies)

    + can have certain fields only visible to those with a housing offer listed => (user settable?)
    + maybe ability to have entire profile viewable by all looking through listings, or only to those already registered with a housing offer up

security:
    + buddy system as described above
    + ability to provide (optional) references on profile-- for housees, friends (incl online friends) is fine. for housers, not sure what to recommend ? people who know them well & can

vouch they are safe? the fact that others in the community know / its not secret housing decreases risk of sexual predation hopefully, but... ?

Airbnb encourages linking with fb account, which might be helpful

      => Reporting system, any sexual propositioning or harassment is a ban-worthy offense (keep info on file & ban if that person comes back)

    +   ? maybe ability for lgbt people to volunteer to interview potential housers (over skype, phone, etc) and post private feedback on those people's profiles assessing their impressions of lgbt support/compatibility for housees to see (+ if the recipient declines to be interviewed, this is also displayed on the person's profile-- potential red flag)

        + rating system - reviews left by people who stayed (not visible (how? easy to break using a fake account) to houser to ensure honesty - also ability to report any pressure/coercion to leave good feedback)

            - separate trans and lgb feedback scores

            - only allow one account per device / be able to ban devices

Probably include a chatting system? So the people in need/houser/volunteer/peers are able to chat in real time or leave messages

Other connections:

      => Automatic tumblr and twitter posts onto official account

        + Generates automatic image with location markers so ppl can see that as an eyeball summary

        + Today,

            - a new request for housing in [Chicago, IL, USA] was posted by a [22]-year old [trans man].

            - New emergency status in [Detroit, MI] due to extreme cold endangers [7] homeless youth on the streets. Please help if you have the means. You can offer housing, contact someone you know who can, or [rent a motel room stay for them through our automated system].

            - etc

      => ability to follow daily email newsletter updates instead for some ppl? or anything else. If email or other personalized update systems, probably better to only post updates on local listings and long-distance-help-possible issues

      => (added 1/28) ability for people just visiting to sign up for a newsletter with quick-access form on main page that just requires email and zip code, which starts sending them local updates? then they can start receiving info without making an account right away (& which might encourage them to sign up later)

      => (added 1/28) with permission of transhousing network owner, we could see whether we can have an automated scraping system that pulls posts from there & automatically adds them to the map as special markers (designated that they are not official accounts on the site & may need to be verified as accurate by the viewer, but are a potential resource for that area, with link to original post provided)

Marketing / Pitching / Background info ("why is this needed"):
Injustice at Every Turn A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey:
      HOUSING
            + Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents became homeless at some point because they were transgender or gender non-conforming, and 1.7% of respondents were currently homeless.
               - Eleven percent (11%) of respondents said they had been evicted from housing at some point in their lives because they are transgender or gender non-conforming.
            + Those [transgender people] who had experienced homelessness [...] were much more likely to have attempted suicide (69%). / Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those [transgender people] who had experienced homelessness said they had attempted suicide.
            + For those respondents who had attempted to access homeless shelters, 29% were turned away altogether, 42% were forced to stay in facilities designated for the wrong gender, and others encountered a hostile environment. Fifty-five percent (55%) reported being harassed, 25% were physically assaulted and 22% were sexually assaulted. [..] Nearly half of all respondents who accessed a shelter (47%) left due to poor treatment [ie harrassment, assault, psychological abuse]. [..] In addition to those who were denied access outright, 25% of respondents reported being evicted [from the homeless shelter] after their transgender identity or gender non-conformity became known.
      EMPLOYMENT
            + 26% of respondents said that they had lost a job due to being transgender or gender non-conforming [...] Forty-seven percent (47%) said they had experienced an adverse job outcome, such as being fired, not hired or denied a promotion because of being transgender/gender non-conforming; [...] For Black, Latino/a, American Indian and multiracial respondents, discrimination in the workplace was even more pervasive, sometimes resulting in up to twice or three times the rates of various negative outcomes.
            + Ninety percent (90%) of those surveyed reported experiencing harassment or mistreatment on the job or took actions to avoid it
      FAMILY
            + Two-fifths (40%) of respondents reported that their parents or other family members "chose not to speak or spend time with me" due to their gender identity/expression
            + Fifty-seven percent (57%) faced some rejection by their family
Queer Youth in general:
      + The Forsaken: A Rising Number of Homeless Gay Teens Are Being Cast Out by Religious Families:
http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/the-forsaken-a-rising-number-of-homeless-gay-teens-are-being-cast-out-by-religious-families-20140903?page=4

Other thoughts:
      must research:
            - legal issues revolving around minors in family-disownment housing crisis

- general legal requirements if any (e.g. licensing, reporting)
- response plan if someone using our app is hurt or abused as a result (look into how Airbnb/Uber/dating sites/etc have responded to violations of trust and figure out what worked and what didn't)

suicide crisis hotline:
- recommend trans-run for-trans hotline

Scaling:
- Would it be helpful to run a pilot program in a limited area first before expanding nationwide? Or should our first release be nationwide?

Competitive Landscape:
Trans Housing Network
their strength: large following
their weaknesses: inefficient, craigslist style
(but not really a competition)
(our service is an improvement over what they offer)

Customer:
Connect with users from Trans Housing Network
generally: trans people in housing crisis, resource volunteers

User Requirements:

User Interface Requirements:
graphical: user friendly, disability accessible
(HTML voice over tags)
what information does user need to provide?
data exchange: no photos, just text + location

Security:
technical: how users log in, how we securely store information
OAUTH, data encryption during transfer
Rails: B-crypt
open question: how much information to request from users?
request too much will drive some users away due to sensitive nature

System Requirements:

Google Maps API
Messaging API e.g. Twitter API
Apache for emails - keep email addresses disguised
      internal messages will be sent to email
      users can reply directly to emails to respond to messages
SMS?

Specification:
Modules include:
Nick - Accounts, buddy system, log in, profiles, design
Stephen - Routes of communication, e.g. email/sms/internal messaging system
Aiden - Matching and map visualization
Richard - reviews, ratings, red-flag parsing
Shantao - External integration

Testing Plan:
everyone tests their own module using Rspec, etc.
we can each start designing tests for our modules

Project Planning:
To be done after we finish and compile our UML diagrams.

Next meeting: Thurs 2/12 4-6pm
To be completed by next meeting: UML diagrams, use cases, user requirements for our modules

Get Microsoft Visio from Nick who has the installer on his hard drive.

Stuff that might help:
Google Map API:
https://developers.google.com/maps/customize
https://developers.google.com/maps/tutorials/fundamentals/adding-a-google-map
https://developers.google.com/maps/documentation/javascript/examples/

Online UML Drawer:
https://www.draw.io/
This is actually quite good, I don't think it inferior to Visio, but its accessible from Google Drive and Dropbox, making it available for all operating systems.

Competitive Landscape - Nick

mailboxer gem,

====March 5=====
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Shantao - External integration, map visualization

Nick will make the first push to github (with MongoDB) //within the next week
Everyone make their own branch (commit + push)
Write tests
Interfaces: Everyone write a document about what information they will need from the other
parts + what information their parts will provide
log/wiki: write the log!