

Proposal: AnimalFinder

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2. Project Description:

Adopting an animal can be difficult. One barrier to adopting an animal is that each place a person may go to in the hopes of adopting requires different applications. This app asks an interested adopter to fill out a single application that serves as their profile. On the other side, people with animals to adopt apply for registration, and then submit profiles of the animals they have that are adoptable. This app seeks to solve practical problems in adoption by requiring one universal application on the part of the adopter and increasing awareness of animals in great need by sorting them towards the top of the adoptable animals. The potential adopter picks the kind of animal they want to adopt, and swipes left on animals they aren't interested in and swipes right on animals they are. Potential adopters who swipe right on animals then have their profile submitted to the respective adopting agency, who then choose the suitor they think fits best and contacts them within the app.

The app is intended to facilitate the adoption process and also increase the number of animals in significant need that are adopted. As such, it's crucial that the app be usable. We must come up with (1) a simple and clear way for animals to be presented so that there aren't too many animals showing up at once, (2) have a fun and rewarding system for notifying the user they've been selected as a potential adopter for an animal, and (3) have a convenient and sleekly designed chat setting for adopting agencies to communicate with potential adopters. Without usable designs for (1), people will get frustrated with information overload, for (2) people may not know they've been selected or not find the notification for being selected very attractive or fun, and for (3) people may get frustrated by a convoluted chat interface or not know when they've received a new message. Therefore, we have a usability problem. Without usable solutions, we face users not being able to learn or remember how to use our app and thus the status quo of adopting animals will remain in place since nobody will try our app. Since we have to conceive solutions to the above three problems and more in order to produce a usable interface for both potential adopters and adopting agencies, this is a compelling project to work on in this course.

Our target users consist of two groups: people who want to adopt an animal and people who have an animal they want adopted. The former group may also be particularly motivated to find animals in need of adoption from rescues and shelters since animals at these institutions will be given preference (i.e. sorted towards the top of the stack of photos) in the application.

With user access being only restricted by an internet connection, and low skill ceiling to learn how to use the application, there are simply no barriers of entry for anyone who is willing to use the application. The only users who could not use the product would be the one's who would have no use for it (those who are not seeking to adopt a pet or are not currently looking to

have a pet put up for adoption). With limited barriers and ease of use, the potential pool of candidates that would be interested and able to use our application is quite large, and is not limited to any particular niche group.

As a general application there is also not a need for specialists to be a part of the team to bring the full application together. Our team is committed to bringing the solution required to solve this problem, and are more than up for the challenge. Though time constraints are a barrier we must overcome, with a well managed time schedule and good constant communication that our team is able to bring, we are more than likely able to finish this project before the end of the term.

There are of course many points that we say we know, but we cannot fully understand how users will comprehend certain functions we implement. We may find that certain features are extremely usable and user friendly, but this may not be the case for a different group of users. With this in mind, it is prudent that we get constant feedback from possible users of our application, to see if a general consensus can be drawn for the overall usability. There will always be “known” variables, but they can also organically change from different perspectives.

What we know:

- Adoption centers have different multiple applications
- Many pets are up for adoption due to moving or unable to provide for pet
- Many animals are in shelters or pounds awaiting adoption
- Pets are euthanized if not adopted for a period of time

What we don't know:

- Limitations when adopting pets on an app
- Response time from adoption centers/people to call back
- Updated information?
- Has the pet been adopted already?
- “Exotic Pets” adoptable? Only certain types in certain states?
- Retention on pets? Allow for trial adoption period?
- Limited to certain areas? Local animal shelters? Within a certain miles radius?