**TEXTBOOK PROJECT SPECIFICATION (used in lectures going forward) – ABRIDGED (pg. 165)**

Equinox Empires, is creating an application to facilitate a human decision network where users can log in and browse decisions posted by other users that need an answer of either A or B. The specific A or B will change with each decision, but it will always be a simple choice between two options with no grey area.

The initial service is free, but the company wishes to generate a direct revenue stream from premium services. The free account is limited in the types of decisions they can post on their account to simple text for both the question and the choices for A and B. Premium services can add other media, such as images and embedded video. When a user votes on a decision, the one who posted the question gets to vote on the answer and give reliability points to the ones who actually gave an answer. The free account is not eligible for reliability points. Gaining reliability gives you the option to add a "Why" description to your answer; in effect, you can comment on why you gave the answer that you did. The posters of the decisions can set the option for whether these "Why" responses are visible only to them or to everyone who views the decision.

A reward structure is planned for answering questions and for posting "Why" responses to questions. By answering and interacting, a user can move up from being a "Novice" to an "Advisor," and eventually move up to being an "Expert." Badges signifying reliability and the user's level will be included with the avatar for the user, adding a visual incentive for the participant to continue participating. The cost of a subscription will be kept incredibly low so that the premium services are available at a value that would be under the radar to most users. Subscriptions are monthly and can be canceled at any time. The goal is to gain revenue by volume of users and not by charging a high fee to a small number of users.

Users will be able to subscribe to each other's question feed, and each user, free or premium, will have a simple profile page with up to four pictures, a list of subscribers with a special notifi­cation for trusted subscribers, and a text biography. The users can make profile pages public, private, or public to subscribers. Users will have the ability to show or hide their region information, which will only be used to browse questions by area.

When users enter the site and log in to the account, they can view new posts for their subscriptions, see updates to their reliability ratings, post new questions, follow up on previously posted questions, check back into questions they have answered, or search for new questions to answer. The methods for searching include finding a subscriber, browsing in a region, doing a keyword search, selecting a category, or a combination of these. They can also get a random question from all of the listings. The advanced search will allow users to limit an area by distance and a range of dates when a question was posted. A user has the ability to retire a question at any time; after a question has been retired, no one will be able to view the question but the per­son who made the original post. All of the responses will remain visible. A retired question can then be deleted to remove it entirely from the system.

There will be an emphasis placed on the privacy of users. Sensitive information will have to be collected for the user to register, but it will not be shared. Users will select an avatar from an existing list or post a picture at their own risk. They have the options for their privacy given in an easily understandable way with very clear choices on what they want public or 􀀹private. There is also an option for profanity filtering in the user preferences where known obscenities will be removed from the text. The option to turn off media embeds and images will also be available. Users can connect to the website from any browser and the company also wants to deploy an app for use on mobile phones so users can connect on the go. Account settings can only be changed from the website itself. Answering questions and posting text questions can be done from the app.

The company wants a clean and clear experience for the user without confusion and distrac­tion in the presentation. Links should be clear and the look of the site should be simple and appealing. Answering a question should be quick and fun and it should encourage the user to answer more and more questions on the network. When a user posts a question, it should be a straightforward interface where text can be entered and media can be embedded via a toolset or a subset of HTML code. No scripting will be allowed in the post, and efforts need to be taken so that all scripting attempts will be removed. The default options selected by the user will be in place, but these can be changed for the individual question. This includes the public access to the "Why" responses and access to a chart to see which response is currently leading.

If a premium user account expires, the users will still retain all of the settings and ratings they received, but the visible badges and decorations to their avatar will be hidden from view until the premium service is restored. Only the options available to the free accounts will be allowed in this case. A free account can be deleted at any time, and the service retains the right to remove a user if misuse, spamming, or excessive behavior is reported. There will be no messages held on the server, but members are able to email each other anonymously. The email will be sent through a form on the service that will filter out any scripting or automatic links; the resulting message will be delivered as ASCII text to the user's registered email. The user has the option to decline to receive messages from other users in the privacy settings. Users will not be able to simply hit "reply" in order to respond to the messages they receive. Instead, they must log in to the site and send the other user a message internally.