

Project Description

The Problem: Shelter dogs are often confined to kennels which leave very little room for physical activity, leading to a stressful life behind chain link walls. While animal shelters work hard to reduce stress for these dogs by bringing in volunteer dog walkers, the number of volunteers is often not sufficient. As a result most dogs rarely leave their kennels.

Our Solution: Date-a-Dog is an Android app which allows users to schedule a date with local shelter dogs without any long term commitments. Our primary goal is to reduce stress for shelter dogs by increasing physical activity, and providing exposure to human companionship, which they currently lack. Our secondary goal is to increase their likelihood for adoption, as dates could result in special bonds between humans and canines. Finally, we also seek to raise pet overpopulation awareness, which could influence a user's decision to adopt, as opposed to buying pets from breeders in the future.

Target Audience: Our app will have a wide spectrum of users to include people:

- Who want a pet, but would like to test drive it first. This could be particularly true of families, where a sudden addition of a pet may compromise child safety.
- Whose apartment buildings do not allow dogs.
- Who are too busy to have a full-time dog.
- Who want to volunteer with a shelter but do not want to commit to a full volunteer schedule, which can typically require more of a time commitment.

Competitive Analysis: Although there are other applications which allow users to schedule dates with shelter dogs, the options are limited to websites where users must first search for a dog, then contact the shelter directly to set up the appointment (i.e. walkzee.com). Our app will automate the request for a walk by storing and transmitting user information directly to the shelter, eliminating the need for users to contact the shelter themselves. In addition to the mobile app for date requesters, we will have an animal shelter web interface where animal shelters can view, approve, or deny date requests.

Major Features:

1. Will provide a centralized interface for users to request a walk with a shelter dogs.
2. For date requesters, it will be a mobile application as opposed to just a website.

3. Animal shelters will not have to submit shelter dog information to our system, we will feed off an existing API which contains all dog info nationwide.
4. Pet search will be more appealing and user friendly through a Tinder-like swipe interface.

Stretch goals:

1. Shelters will be able to customize volunteer forms according to their needs.
2. Adding option for customers-shelter direct communication.
3. A ratings system allowing users to rate shelters and vice versa.
4. First time pop-up instructions on basic app use.

Non-functional requirements:

- The system will keep user application information secure.
- The application will be easy to use for children and adults.
- The approval website for shelters will be easy to understand and use.
- Our application data does not depend on Petfinder's API operating status, i.e. petfinder.com going down does not mean that our application will not work.

External documentation:

- FAQ
- Help tab
- Perhaps a pop up pointing out features to first time users, however this is a stretch goal.