The design of a web application to act as a hub of services for the transgender community in Liverpool

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A person holding a flag

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure A transgender flag being waved at LGBT gay pride march by ‘ink drop’ used under Standard License from Adobe

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# 1. Problem description

## 1.1 Title

The design of a web application to act as a hub of services for the transgender community in Liverpool

## 1.2 Description

There are many vital services available to the transgender community in Liverpool, but it can be a challenge to find them. This is particularly the case for new members of the community who may be in a vulnerable situation, as the point of coming out is a huge life change that may be accompanied by mental health issues and the loss of relationships. This is compounded by transgender healthcare facing profound ignorance (and in some cases outright bigotry) from many GPs, who may attempt to block or delay attempts at medical transition, alongside extreme waiting lists for appointments at Gender Identity Clinics (McAuley, 2022).

The trans community attempts to solve these issues in numerous ways, mostly informal (e.g. by word of mouth in group chats), but two more formal ways are the Liverpool Trans Wiki (TransLiverpool Wiki, 2023) which catalogues and comments on many services that are available; and the Spirit Level peer support group which invites in guests from services to explain what they offer to the community. The developed web app seeks to build on these solutions and incorporates this specialist knowledge into it.

The web app is usable on web browsers using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript and utilizes an AWS DynamoDB table as a database, consisting of several pages. Firstly, a page that contains a map which displays services on it, which is filterable by type (e.g. mental health or peer support) and gender identity (e.g. transfeminine and transmasculine); and when a service is selected more information and contact details is provided. Another page contains a search function for a database which returns services based on user queries. There is also a page that contains an events calendar. The app was designed such that information is one way, to protect the user’s privacy and limit the amount of sensitive data stored by the app. Ethical considerations were very important for the project because some users may not wish to be completely open about their trans identity, so may be concerned that the use of the app could reveal this.

Requirements elicitation for the project also explored another feature, a map which displays the location of gender-neutral toilets at businesses such as cafes, restaurants, and pubs. However, this will be considered for further work beyond this project and was considered out of scope to keep the amount of development to an achievable level. The scope of the project was for services in Liverpool & Merseyside due to the ability to engage with services and their users directly and due to already existing knowledge. However, if successful the app could be expanded to cover the whole of the UK, it would be a matter of gathering the data rather than significant technical challenges. Online only services that have no physical footprint in Liverpool & Merseyside were also considered out of scope, though some of these were included in an ‘important links’ page rather than as part of the core services covered by the app. The scope of the services included was that they must offer something specific to the trans community, rather than broader services (e.g. the trans focused CMAGIC & TSS counselling services would be included, but not the general NHS counselling service offered by Talk Liverpool.)

## 1.3 Legal, social, ethical, and professional issues (LSEPIs)

A requirement of the project involved following the BCS Code of Conduct (2023), which includes promoting equal access to IT (discussed below, when considering the impact to equality and accessibility) and not to disclosing confidential information. Additionally, there were responsibilities to data protection under GDPR, so ICO (2023) guidance was followed in relation to personal data. Therefore, when conducting requirements elicitation in the form of a questionnaire; in addition to gaining the proper informed consent of participants, consideration had to be taken to protect their data and anonymity. This included storage of completed questionnaires, with Microsoft OneDrive used as per Open University Research Data Management Policy (2021). The names of participants were redacted, as were any other statements or information that could be used to identify them so they could be quoted anonymously. The exception to this were service providers, since by noting them as a provider of a particular service they may be unavoidably identifiable, but they were informed and consent gained so that they could choose to opt-in or opt-out (in the end the service providers that agreed to participate dropped out, as discussed in section 3.2).

The Open University guidelines on conducting research with human participants were followed, with the research not being considered high risk as all participants being over the age of 18 with full cognitive capacity, the full knowledge and consent of all participants was gained, and the questions did not broach sensitive topics. The Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet, which explain what data is stored, what it will be used for and to gain consent are in appendices B and C (Open University, 2023a).

One security issue that needed to be addressed was regarding providing valid credentials to AWS to access the database (a DynamoDB table). There were multiple ways to do this, including hardcoding them into the code itself, which is not recommended, as it presents a security risk even if they were later removed due to version control systems retaining older versions of code (Amazon, 2023d). Instead, the recommended approach by AWS was to use two other AWS services, Cognito and IAM (Identity and Access Management) (Amazon, 2023e; Amazon, 2023f). Cognito identity pools could be used to generate temporary credentials for the users of the app, which were applied for the role created in IAM.

The app was designed for information to be one way, so that no sensitive data from the user would be stored. The information stored in the database is information about the services and events, all of which is publicly available. The credentials generation described above does not authenticate users, as user accounts are not required, so there is no way for the identity of the user to be exposed. This avoids privacy and data handling issues that might have otherwise arisen and gives the users confidence that they can use the app without inadvertently revealing their transgender status.

DynamoDB was used under AWS free tier and is available for “all types of customers – students, small businesses, and Fortune 500 companies” (Amazon, 2023xa). AWS has numerous terms, policies and agreements that must be followed when using their services including not undertaking any illegal or fraudulent activity, distributing spam, or breaching the intellectual property of third parties (Amazon 2023xb). For each service a description is stored, which is excepts from either the Liverpool Trans Wiki or from the services’ website and is their intellectual property. For the purposes of the project, this information would be classified as ‘fair dealing’ as it is for the purposes of private study (Intellectual Property Office, 2021). Permission was granted to use the information from the wiki, but for a full release the services would also have to be contacted and their permission gained to use this copyrighted information. The other products used such as Visual Studio Code and HERE Maps were similarly used under a free license.

## 1.4 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion concerns (EDI)

Although the application was being developed for a minority community, this does not necessarily mean it would automatically meet responsibilities for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Even within the transgender community there are many different experiences that are quite different, trans masculine, trans feminine and non-binary for example and these identities may intersect with other identities such as neurodivergence, race and disability. For transgender people, examining the nature of gender and how it exists in society is often part of the experience of transition and trans feminine people frequently experience what is known as transmisogyny (Julia Serano, 2007), the simultaneous experience of sexism and transphobia i.e. being sexualised in lurid or titillating ways, but also presented as dangerous or ‘perverted’ at the same time. However, as a white, neurotypical, trans feminine person there are still unconscious biases that come with this that must be examined. It is also important to note that while the legal framework is important, it may be flawed with for example the Equality Act 2010 containing language considered outdated and offensive to the transgender community such as ‘gender reassignment and transsexual’, as noted by a report by the Women and Equalities Committee (Miller et al, 2015).

The questionnaire for requirements elicitation resulted in respondents discussing some of these issues, making suggestions for transmasculine, non-binary people and those who are neurodivergent, such as having service tags to filter content specifically for identities e.g. transmasculine people. This is not just for the convenience of the user, but also their mental wellbeing as some services that people transitioning from male to female might trigger gender incongruence in those transitioning from female to male, and in my own experience it is common in trans spaces to be aware of these issues. The final app implemented these filter tags for services directed towards transmasculine and transfeminine people.

However, beyond the content, when coding the app accessibility issues needed to be considered, such as users that use screen readers, those with colour blindness and users that may be using a variety of devices or browsers. As Gray states in his CSS Tutorial – Full Course for Beginners (2022), if the font size is set to a specific pixel size, then it will stay at that size regardless of what settings the user might have. This may cause issues particularly for partially sighted users, but also for any user who simply prefers to have larger font. Instead using a ‘rem’ unit will mean that the font size is relative to the root element and will scale accordingly. Additionally, setting fallback fonts improves accessibility by ensuring the text will always be displayed with a ‘web safe’ font.

It was also important to consider how it would be read by a screen reader and with particular care taken when using a property such as ‘display:none’, which not only hides an element from view but also from being read by a screen reader. The pop-in side menu is triggered by toggling a checkbox (by pressing the hamburger menu symbol) and initially this was hidden from view by using ‘display:none’, which made it un-selectable by tabbing through elements. To change this, a style was added to the checkbox so that when it is in focus, the hamburger icon changes background colour as it does when hovered over and the checkbox was then hidden by setting the opacity to 0. The code snippet in figure 13 shows this change.

![Text

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Figure Removal of display:none for screen readers

Consider more about accessibility, such as colour contrast & colour blindness.

## 1.5 Analysis of likely impact

The project, if successful would increase the visibility of services available to the trans community and so would mean that transgender individuals would gain the benefit of accessing them. As these services provide very important and worthwhile things, it could mean that a trans person gets access to essential sexual health care much faster to avoid potentially living with an STD; finds a peer support group to help them with their transition; or a trans-friendly GP who is prepared to offer HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) through bridging prescriptions.

However, increasing the visibility of these services could also have unintended negative consequences too. In the last few years some trans related events and organisations have been targeted by far right and ‘Gender Critical’/’TERF’ groups (Braidwood, 2018), including protests accusing trans and gender non-conforming people of paedophilia (Hansford, 2023); violence directed at trans people and allies; and faeces smeared on the entrance of a supportive church (O’Thomson, 2023). During requirements elicitation one of the respondents raised this as a potential risk for the app: “not sure if this might allow terfs to find and cause problems for those services/users who attend that place?” (n.b. ‘terf’ stands for Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist and is a disparaging term for people from a feminist tradition who are anti-trans, but it is often used as a synonym for the broader ‘Gender Critical’ movement or all people who are anti-trans). There is a risk therefore that this app would provide a way for those with ill intent to target these services.

However, on balance, the positive aspects of the app strongly outweigh the risks it may present. Those who wish to target the trans community could find out about these services through other means already and although it is important to take reasonable precautions for safety, it is also important to increase the visibility and awareness of the transgender community. Indeed, one of the main organised events for the community is ‘Transgender Day of Visibility’ for this purpose.

Source for ‘terf’?? Source for TDoV??

# 2 Account of related literature

## 2.1 DBaaS

The initial focus of the literature review was on sources relating to databases, DataBase-as-a-Service (DBaaS) products and security and privacy issues relating to databases. The database is key to the functioning of the app and was implemented early in development to give adequate time to work out any unforeseen issues. This involved working beyond existing skills, since in TM352, the module the project builds on, the database was already setup and provided with the focus on API calls and using JSON (The Open University, 2021xa). The search considered the date that the sources were written, as for some of them there would be a risk of being obsolete, since cloud technology is a relatively recent innovation with the term being coined in 2006 around the release of Amazon Web Services (Regalado, 2011) and has experienced a rapid expansion since then. The source was also considered, with a strong preference given to papers published in journals or from conferences; textbooks; and official documentation.

Poljak et al (2017) compare three popular relational database management systems, MySQL, PostgreSQL and Oracle database 11g using criteria such as differences in syntax and performance. It concludes that Oracle is the best option where speed and performance of complex operations is important, but that MySQL is a good open-source alternative if the cost of Oracle is prohibitive. This would help form a conclusion around which database technology to use for the project and understand what the trade-offs were since there was no budget for the project. The paper was from a MIPRO conference and has been cited in other published works.

Patil et al (2017) explain the differences between relational databases (which feature linked tables) and non-relational databases (also referred to as NoSQL, it is a more flexible type, including in a document with JSON style structure) and then compares the performance of them primarily using MySQL (relational) and MongoDB (non-relational), among the most popular of each type respectively. They found significant performance advantages for the non-relational database for performing basic operations, as shown in figure 18 below, which shows the number of records inserted and the time each database takes to load them, with MongoDB being the faster of the two.

Chart, line chart

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Figure Time taken to load records by two databases

Al-Refai et al (2021) lays out some of the challenges facing Database-as-a-Service (DBaaS) service model; unavailability, interoperability and confidentiality and proposes solutions to tackle them. The source was important for understanding the implications of using a DBaaS solution for the project. The paper also includes its own literature review, which was a useful jumping off point to further reading on the subject. The paper was from an ACIT conference and has been cited by another published work.

Security was another important consideration when using databases and was particularly crucial for this project as protecting users’ privacy is essential both from a moral point of view and to maintain user confidence. Mehak et al (2014) outline the challenges of DBaaS security in detail, including confidentiality, integrity, availability, and privacy. They conclude that further research is needed into the topic, and it should be noted that since this book was published in 2014 more recent literature should be considered to supplement this. The book ‘Cloud Computing: challenges, limitations and R&D solutions’ was described as a “comprehensive overview” by Beidler (2015) for Choice Reviews and the book and the relevant chapter has been widely cited in published works.

Some important factors when choosing database technology are whether to use a relational database or a NoSQL database; whether the database is free; familiarity with the database and the performance of the database. There are multiple solutions that could be viewed as equally correct, or with only marginal differences, so in some instances an arbitrary decision must be made because the time to consider the differences in detail could be used to on more important work. The database did not require interlinked tables since each service would only have properties associated with itself, so a better performing (Patil et al, 2017) NoSQL database such as MongoDB could be used.

## 2.2 Requirements

The next set of literature to be reviewed was relating to requirements including how to identify them, the differences between functional and non-functional requirements, their elicitation and analysis. This was crucial for the project, so that the goals and boundaries would be clear, as well as the expected outcomes and the characteristics it should have. The goal was to find sources that cover all these aspects of requirements, and unlike much of the other literature reviewed for the project the date when written was less crucial, as this subject has not changed over time in the same way that technology might.

Nilsson & Fagerström (2006) discuss the analysis of requirements once stakeholders have been consulted and how to balance their potentially competing interests to aid in the decision-making process. Furthermore, they outline a method of analysis considers different needs stakeholders might have and the extent to which requirements may meet them. They outline a method of collating all this in a ‘stakeholder and requirement matrix’ as shown in figure 19. This piece of literature is a research paper that was published in the Computers in Industry journal and has been widely cited by other academics, so can be seen as a trustworthy source.

A picture containing text, crossword puzzle, receipt

Description automatically generated

Figure Example Stakeholder and Requirements matrix

Robertson & Robertson (2006) provide a detailed overview of requirements, covering topics such as what requirements are, why they are important and the process of writing them. It also covers the Volere Requirements Specification Template that was pioneered by Robertson & Robertson with others, that forms a foundation and structure for requirements specifications. This book covers important foundational concepts and informed the TM354 module on software engineering, so can be considered a trustworthy source.

These sources provide different but complimentary ways to consider and analyse requirements. Both the stakeholder and requirements matrix and Volere template were useful tools to be utilised, but care was also taken that they were used in a proportionate way for the project. Using them to their full potential would have take a very significant amount of time so shortened versions were used, which were still elucidating and provided context for further discussion. The textbook for TM354: Software Engineering Block 1 Units 1-4 From domain to requirements (The Open University, 2014) does this with the Volere Template and so was a useful resource as an example of narrowing this down.

## 2.3 CSS

Skills development for CSS, to assist in the development of the visual elements of the user interface was also an important subject for a literature review. Previous modules such as TM352 did not cover CSS in much detail, so the goal was to learn enough basic CSS to create a simple, but functional appearance for the app. Since the CSS language is being continually updated, more recent sources were preferred, though some older sources may still be of use since the basics of the language have stayed the same.

Gray with CSS Tutorial – Full Course for Beginners (2022), produced an extensive video tutorial for freeCodeCamp on CSS starting at the very basics including fonts and colour changes. It also covers grid layout and flexbox, as well as media queries which were useful to ensure that the app maintains the intended appearance on different devices. The tutorial also covers accessibility issues, for example mentioning how code will affect the way screen readers will read the page, so it was also a useful resource to help ensure that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion concerns were addressed, as discussed in section 1.4. FreeCodeCamp is a charity founded by a teacher to provide free online courses teaching coding and has other learning materials that was useful throughout project, for example on JavaScript and REST APIs, as required. Gray is a lecturer and PhD student at Fort Hays State University and has produced many teaching resources on web development. This source was a useful starting place to learn the basics of CSS and was combined with other sources to fill out knowledge gaps as needed.

Meiert (2015) in ‘The Little Book of HTML/CSS Coding Guidelines’ provides guidelines for coding, explaining good practise and the reasons for it. For example, naming classes/IDs so they properly reflect the purpose of an element and are ‘as short as possible but as long as necessary’. This helped ensure that the code was consistent and easy to read, both for other people but also for myself. This was important because as the project went on, the amount of code expanded and returning to code written months earlier was necessary. Similarly, the W3C markup validation service (2023) helped ensure the code was valid and using proper syntax.

There are numerous books on HTML and CSS which would be suitable for skills development for the project, so there must be a degree of arbitrary choice when considering which one to use. Web Design Playground: HTML and CSS the Interactive Way (McFedries, 2019) is a more recent one, ensuring that newer updates to the language can be covered if necessary. Additionally, the author has written many other books which have sold ‘over four million copies’ on the web development and related topics, so can be considered reliable source when covering an introductory topic. The Book covers the basics of CSS and HTML including topics such as pseudo-elements and how the cascade and inheritance work.

These sources gave a solid grounding in CSS, combining audio-visual and written learning to aid in the skills development required for the project. They also helped when considering accessibility issues as development went on, to ensure that the app is pleasant to use for people who use screen readers, have colour blindness or any other potential barriers to using the app.

## 2.4 Choice of Database

The literature review in section 2.1 concluded that a NoSQL database would be a suitable for the project. Two NoSQL options that were considered as options for the project are OpenStack Trove and AWS DynamoDB and this literature review compares the two, provides sources for skills development and concludes about the most suitable choice. OpenStack Trove is an open-source option that was used in TM352, so some familiarity with it already exists. DynamoDB is a popular option from Amazon Web Services that is available on the Amazon Free Tier but may have some costs if the free allocation is exceeded (Amazon, 2023a).

The official documentation for OpenStack (2020) was an important starting point when considering which database to use. As previously stated in TM352 the OpenStack Trove database already set up and the focus of the module was on the API calls and the use of the database. This documentation covers the installation and setup of the database which would be a crucial part of skills development if OpenStack Trove were chosen. As the official documentation it can be considered a definitive and highly reliable source, though other sources may provide additional information and audio-visual guides may be a useful supplement to this.

FreeCodeCamp have a video guide for setting up and working with OpenStack Trove (OpenStack Tutorial – Operate Your Own Private Cloud (Full Course), 2022). This would be a solid starting point for skills development if OpenStack Trove were chosen and helped understand the steps involved in setting up the database prior to this. It was previously established in section 2.1 when considering their video tutorial for CSS that FreeCodeCamp is a reliable source.

The OpenInfra Foundation was formed to govern the OpenStack project and its mission is to help people “build and operate open infrastructure” (OpenInfra Foundation, n.d.). It hosts yearly summits which features industry professionals working with open infrastructure to give talks and presentations, which pertain to open infrastructure, and are hosted on their YouTube channel. Configure, Debug and Install OpenStack Trove (2016) is one of these presentations by Sadasiva Pillalamari & Rama Krishna Bhupathi, software engineers for Hewlitt Packard Enterprise, each with decades of experience in the industry. The presentation includes a demonstration of a non-relational database, MongoDB, which it was decided in the literature review in section 2.1 could be an appropriate choice for the project. This presentation and others from OpenIntra Foundation would complement the previous sources for skills development for using OpenStack Trove.

As with OpenStack, the official documentation for AWS DynamoDB is also a crucial resource and can be considered a definitive, reliable source. It provides detailed guides for setting up and using DynamoDB tables (the terminology used to refer to a database) and how the unique identifiers, the partition key and sort key work. It is recommended that the AWS SDK (Software Development Kit be used, which constructs requests and converts the responses on your behalf, and the structure of the SDK between the application and DynamoDB is shown in figure 2 (Amazon, 2023b).

A diagram of a software application

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure High-level overview of Amazon DynamoDB application programming using the AWS SDKs

Two textbooks were also identified to supplement the AWS documentation for skills development. Tankariya & Parmar (2019) provide a guide to passing the AWS Developer’s Certification, which has a chapter on DynamoDB featuring an explanation of the Query and Scan operations that would be useful for applying the service tags and allowing users to search for the services they need. Deshpande (2015) in the DynamoDB Cookbook explains from the basics of how to get started with AWS to designing applications and provides many ‘coding recipes’ which would provide useful jumping off points when implementing the code for the project. All these authors are experienced, active industry professionals and given the subject matter is relatively basic, it is reasonable to consider them reliable experts.

The two main differences relevant for this project between the OpenStack Trove and DynamoDB are the amount of effort and time required for setup and cost. Initially when conceiving of the project, OpenStack Trove was considered the likely choice due to using for TM352, however it became quickly apparent when reviewing literature for it that this would require a very significant amount of time investment and likely skills development to set it up. Firstly, it is not available for Windows, so would require either the creation of a virtual machine or dual boot installation for Linux Ubuntu 16.04. Then the Linux CLI would need to be used to install OpenStack and relevant packages including Horizon, the OpenStack GUI and then Trove. This would require some refreshing of knowledge or skills development in addition the literature already reviewed here and would run the risk of an unforeseen issue delaying this crucial element of the project. In comparison, to begin using DynamoDB all that is required is creating an account with AWS and confirming credentials. The other issue is regarding cost since the project has no budget, the OpenStack option is open-source and free, but AWS may involve some cost. AWS provides a ‘free tier’ of 25GB of storage, 25 Write Capacity Units and Read Capacity Units, enough to allow 200 million requests per month (Amazon, 2023a), which would be more than sufficient for this project given the relatively small amount of data involved. Were the project to have a full release, this must be kept in mind so that unanticipated charges were not incurred if the amount of data stored or transferred were to grow significantly. For these reasons AWS DynamoDB was chosen as the database for the project and the literature reviewed above will provide a basis for skills development and assist in implementing the database.

## 2.5 Miscellaneous literature

Arnowitz et al in Effective Prototyping for Software (2007) explore effective prototyping and explains how both overachieving prototypes (with inappropriate high fidelity) and underachieving prototypes (with too much ambiguity) can be problematic. It was particularly useful when considering wireframe sketches and how useful they might be. Initially the project lifecycle was going to focus on prototyping and getting ongoing feedback from users, but this was later changed. Had that not been the case, this would have been a particularly important source for developing prototypes. Although the book is from 2007, it deals with concepts that are more fundamental and fixed rather than technologies that may change rapidly, so can be considered reliable. Additionally, the authors are all very experienced in the industry working in Design and User Experience, for companies such as Adobe, Apple and Oracle; so can be considered experts on the subject.

When revisiting styling later in the project, an additional source was needed to supplement the sources found in the section 2.3, which had more specificity. Mastering CSS Grid (Thormeier, 2023) goes into more detail about CSS Grid, which was used to lay out the app and ensure a consistent arrangement of items on the page. It covers both basic and advanced concepts, so was useful when starting with basic CSS knowledge to develop skills. The book is very recent, being published in 2023, so can be considered up to date in terms of technology and the author of the book is an industry professional who has published numerous articles and an online course on related topics.

The project lifecycle and risk management were other aspects of the project that needed to be considered, so Hughes’ Project Management for IT-Related Projects (2012) was particularly useful as it covers both these topics extensively. It was written to support candidates for the BCS Foundation Certificate in IS Project Management, though covers topics broader than this. As part of its section on risk management it suggests using a ‘probability impact grid’ (figure xx) to help prioritise which risks require action and was utilized in section 4.2.3 for this purpose. In addition to be written to support a BCS (the Chartered Institute for IT) qualification, the book was provided as part of the Open University module TM254, so can be considered a very reliable source.

(scan page from book)

Previous sources on databases focused on choosing a database technology, and how those technologies might be implemented. However, to supplement this another source on the more fundamental concepts was also needed concerning databases and API’s. freeCodeCamp in addition to its video guides, which have been used as sources previously also have written tutorials and one on CRUD (an acronym for Create, Read, Update and Delete) was useful for refreshing knowledge when setting up the API’s for the DynamoDB table in section 3.4 (Olawanle, 2022). freeCodeCamp was previously established as a reliable source and the author is an industry professional who writes for them regularly.

Events calendar?

Discord bots?

# 3. Account of Project Work and its outcome

## 3.1 User Interface Wireframe Sketches

Three initial ideas for UI layout were roughly hand sketched in Figures 20, 21 and 22 with Figure 20 using Google Maps for inspiration, Figure 21 having menus that swipe in from the sides and Figure 22 being a much simpler and more basic. Wireframes in the form of basic early sketches can help visualize some of the assumptions to help understand whether an idea is worth pursuing and allow quick and easy experimentation with different ideas. (Arnowitz et al, 2007).

The advantage of the layout in Figure 20 is that it would be familiar to users, since Google Maps is such a ubiquitous app any app using a similar layout should feel natural and easy to use. The layout in Figure 21 would have a clean and pleasant interface, keeping it uncluttered, particularly for smaller devices. This style is quite common, including in apps such as Twitter and Discord. However, it may run the risk of users not realising the menu is there without some visual cue, so for a full release gathering feedback would be crucial to ensure the design is intuitive.

Prior to undertaking the project, experience using CSS and visual styling was limited and both the designs in Figures 4 and 5 would have required some time learning how to implement them. Time was allocated in the schedule for skills development on CSS and the literature review in section 2.3 identified appropriate sources for this. If skills development had been unsuccessful, or time constraints meant that attempts at styling were limited, the simplified design in figure xx was to be a backup option. The design in figure yy was chosen and provided the basis for the project going forward.

Diagram, engineering drawing

Description automatically generated

Figure Rough sketch of UI using Google Maps as inspiration

A piece of paper with writing

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure Rough sketch of UI with menus that swipe in

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Figure Rough sketch of UI in a simplified style

## 3.2 Requirements elicitation

Initially a preliminary project description was reviewed to identify some potential requirements, these would represent the outline of what the system as initially proposed would deliver. The next step was to consult with stakeholders so that their feedback could potentially confirm they were correct, remove them entirely, or adjust them. These proposed requirements are outlined below, with functional requirements and non-functional requirements having the abbreviations FR and NFR.

The system shall:

* FR1: display services for the transgender community in Liverpool on a map.
* FR2: provide information and contact details for each service.
* FR3: have tags to show or hide the services displayed on the map.
* FR4: show directions to the location of a selected service.
* FR5: have a searchable database of services.
* FR6: display events related to the services or for the community in a calendar.
* NFR1: be designed to maintain the user’s privacy by default and to give the user control over privacy options where possible.
* FR7: display the location of businesses with gender neutral toilets on a map.

Using the classes of non-functional requirement identified by Robertson & Robertson (2006), NFR1 could possibly be considered a legal requirement (due to legal requirements of handling sensitive data) or a security requirement (due to maintaining confidentiality). However, it could also be described a cultural requirement since there are unique aspects to the trans community that go beyond what might normally be considered ‘privacy’, such as the name of the app and when notifications may occur.

Nilsson & Fagerstrom (2005) suggest constructing a ‘stakeholder and requirements matrix’ which can be used to show “a rich picture of all the stakeholders” and the relative importance of their needs. As previously discussed, the amount of feedback sought from stakeholders has been scaled down to be manageable for the scope of this project, so only a partial matrix will be constructed, but a full release that elicited more responses could flesh it out further. A questionnaire was therefore designed to elicit responses from stakeholders that would assist in both the creation of the matrix and to get feedback on the proposed requirements. Participants were asked how useful a feature (that that delivered a proposed requirement) would be to them; to rate the importance of it; and for further feedback, as shown in figure 23. As stated in section 1.3, the Open University guidelines on conducting research with human participants (Open University, 2023a) was followed, a copy of the Consent Form, Participant Information Sheet and a full copy of the questionnaire are included in Appendices B, C, and A respectively.

![Table

Description automatically generated]()

Figure Example question for stakeholder elicitation

When analysing the completed questionnaires, the goal was to see if any changes to the requirements were required; to identify the needs of a stakeholder group; to match how well a requirement meets that need and to be aware of any unexpected feedback that may elicit entirely separate requirements. The service providers that were contacted were among those who did not complete the questionnaire, with one withdrawing late on not leaving time to find a replacement. There were three respondents to the questionnaire who were potential users of the application, so the analysis focused on this single stakeholder group.

A full breakdown of the analysis of the responses is in appendix D, and a summary of this is:

* FR1, FR2 and FR5 were valid for the stakeholder group and remain unchanged.
* FR3 was amended to “*have tags to show or hide the services displayed on the map, based on type of service and the gender identities they provide for.”* This was to provide additional clarification and to add the gender identity filter based on feedback.
* FR6 was amended to “*collate existing events for the community from other sources, in a calendar.”* This was to emphasise that the calendar should not be additional, separate source for events but instead collate existing sources together.
* NFR1 was valid for the stakeholder group and remained unchanged. But feedback highlighted an important point regarding safety vs visibility which was discussed in section 1.5.
* FR4 was removed, as feedback suggested that this would not meet user needs.
* FR7 was decided to be beyond the scope of the project and not considered further.

The stakeholder needs identified from this were:

* *N1.1: Finding a service that I need to access*
* *N1.2: Personalise the experience of finding services to my identity*
* *N1.3: Find out about community events*
* *N1.4: Maintain my safety and privacy when using it*

Table 6 below is the resulting stakeholder and requirements matrix. The extent to which a requirement meets a need is expressed as either none, low, medium, or high. This was parsed from the priority that users gave in their responses but also by interpreting their written responses and an understanding of how the requirements and needs will interact.

Table Stakeholder and requirements matrix work in progress

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | FR1 | FR2 | FR3 | FR5 | FR6 | NFR1 |
| Trans community app users | N1.1 | H | H |  | H |  |  |
| N1.2 |  |  | H | M |  |  |
| N1.3 | L | L |  |  | H |  |
| N1.4 |  |  |  |  |  | H |
| Service providers | N2.1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| N2.2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table x is a condensed Volare Template based on the version used in TM354 (The Open University, 2014), which covers many of the crucial aspects of the project such as the functional and non-functional requirements, the scope of the project, the stakeholders, and some constraints. For a full release this could be extended as needed, but as stated in section 2.2, this should be used proportionately so that unnecessary work isn’t undertaken. These sections could be further extended such as the ‘naming conventions and terminology’ expanded into a full glossary and more non-functional requirements explored and categorised, as explored with NF1 above.

|  |
| --- |
| **Volere Template** |
| **Project Drivers** |
| 1. *Purpose of the project*   Improving the visibility of services for the transgender community in Liverpool to help people find the vital services they need. |
| 1. *The stakeholders*   The users of the application are assumed to be transgender people who are looking for services to fulfil their needs. They may be new to the community and unaware of terminology or what is available, or more experienced and surer of what they are looking for. The users may be from a wide variety of backgrounds, ability, and neurodiversity.  The providers of services may not interact with the app directly but will benefit from increased usability if it means more users access their services. |
| **Project Constraints** |
| 1. *Mandated constraints*   Zero budget due to nature of the project, so all choices (e.g. for the database) must reflect this.  Timescale of February – September with no option of extending, which may mean some features may not be complete, be scaled back or left out.  The nature of the TMA’s and EMA may mean a focus on things other than development at times (e.g. project lifecycle). |
| 1. *Naming conventions and terminology*   Transgender – an umbrella term used to describe anyone whose gender identity is different from their birth sex.  Non-binary – an umbrella term used to describe anyone whose gender identity does not completely fit into the binary ‘male’ and ‘female’ categories.  LGBTQIA+ – an acronym to describe the wider community, which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and the + represents all other identities in the community.  Closet/Closeted – someone who conceals their LGBTQIA+ status from others, often for their own safety.  Transmasculine/Transfeminine – indicates whether someone is transitioning in a predominantly masculinizing or feminizing way, making no assumptions as to identity.  DBaaS – DataBase as a Service, database over the cloud, provided by a third party.  AWS – Amazon Web Services, the suite of online cloud computing services offered by Amazon.  Table – The AWS DynamoDB term for a database, a collection of data.  Item – An entry in the table, similar to a row.  Attribute – An element of data.  (Amazon, 2023b) |
| 1. *Relevant facts and assumptions*   The app will not receive the amount of traffic required to exceed the AWS free tier limits. |
| **Functional Requirements** |
| 1. *Scope*   Services within the Liverpool & Merseyside area.  Services that offer something specific to the transgender community, rather than to the wider public.  A proposed map of gender-neutral bathrooms is considered out of scope. |
| 1. *Functional requirements*   FR1: display services for the transgender community in Liverpool on a map.  FR2: provide information and contact details for each service.  FR3: have tags to show or hide the services displayed on the map, based on type of service and the gender identities they provide for.  FR5: have a searchable database of services.  FR6: collate existing events for the community from other sources, in a calendar. |
| **Non-Functional Requirements** |
| NFR1: be designed to maintain the user’s privacy by default and to give the user control over privacy options where possible. |

## 3.3 User Interface Design

Some skills development was undertaken by studying Gray’s CSS Tutorial – Full Course for Beginners (2022) and McFedries’ Web Design Playground HTML and CSS the Interactive Way (2019). The goal was to gain enough knowledge to produce a simple, but effective layout that would maximise screen space to ensure that information is legible to the user, while taking into consideration accessibility issues (discussed in section 1.4). In section 3.1 three different designs were considered with a design with menus that slide in from the sides chosen as the basis for the project, but a balance needed to be taken between investing time on learning how to produce the design and spending time on other critical aspects of the project.

Initially a simple menu bar was created using an unordered list, adapting a ‘hamburger’ menu as Gray and McFedries both illustrate, by utilizing the transition property and a hidden checkbox to activate the menu. This was then further adapted to have the transition horizontal so that it emulates the design with menus sliding in from the side. This opens and closes by tapping the hamburger icon and is shown in figure x which has placeholder buttons for the service tags and a green background where the map would be later implemented.

![Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated]()

Figure horizontally opening menu

The same technique was used to add an info box that pops out from the other side which would contain the information and contact details about a service selected from the map. Since the scripts to implement the map and pins had not yet been implemented, a visible checkbox was placed in the header to use as a placeholder trigger for it to pop out. The first attempt at coding this resulted in the description overflowing the viewport on some display sizes but was fixed by defining the max-height property. The resulting code snippet is shown in figure 27 and the UI is shown in figure 28.

![Text

Description automatically generated]()

Figure code snippet for the style of parts of the info box

![Graphical user interface, text, application, chat or text message

Description automatically generated]()

Figure UI with menu and info box open

Later in the project the styling was revisited with the layout adjusted to implement CSS Grid to structure the page and achieve a consistent arrangement of the items. This arranges items in rows and columns with gaps between them, and the grid item in each cell can be any HTML item such as a div (Thormeier, 2023). This was important after the map and service/gender tags were implemented as without it, resizing the window would cause the map and tag buttons to overlap. Figure x shows the result, after the map and service & gender tags had been implemented and Figure y shows a code snippet with the grid columns for the header.

A screenshot of a map

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a computer program

Description automatically generated

## 3.4 Setting up the database and API’s

To begin setting up the database, the first task was to create a DynamoDB table (the terminology used for the database) and the APIs using the AWS SDKs, as explained in section 2.4. One of the challenges of using DynamoDB is that the API’s need to be set up manually, as although AWS provides low level APIs these can be cumbersome to use, and it is recommended that using the AWS SDK (Software Development Kit) is a better approach. The documentation includes a step-by-step guide on how to use the SDK and how to build a CRUD API (i.e. with operations to Create, Read, Update and Delete, the basic operations used in database management systems (Olawanle, 2022)) which also utilizes other Amazon services; Lambda and API Gateway (Amazon, 2023c). Firstly, a table is created in DynamoDB, then create a function in AWS Lambda which serves as the back-end of the API. Lambda runs code without provisioning or managing servers, and the code for the function is provided in the tutorial but then edited to reflect the table name and the ‘put’ operation to include the columns of the DynamoDB table. Figure 3 shows the edited put operation using placeholder attributes. This was successfully tested using the CURL command line tool and the results are shown in Appendix E.

A screen shot of a computer code

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure PUT operation for the CRUD API edited with placeholder attributes

## 3.5 Implementing the map and pins

With the Table created and API’s functioning, the map and map pins could then be implemented and the APIs utilised to retrieve information from the database to place the pins in the correct location. Google Maps and HERE Maps were two reasonable choices for the project, however HERE Maps was chosen due to previous experience using it in TMA352 (The Open University, 2021). HERE provide numerous code examples, including some which illustrate how to initialise the map, how to centre it on a specified location, how to restrict the movement of the map within specified boundaries and place a marker at a specified location (HERE, 2023). These code examples were modified with map centred on Liverpool and a marker at a hard coded location. Accessing the API for the map requires creating an account with HERE, registering an app with them and then generating an API key which can be inserted in the code as shown in figure 7.

A screen shot of a computer

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure API Key for the HERE Map

The next step was to use a GET request to access the DynamoDB table to find location data for services and then put a pin at that location. As explained in section 1.3 best practise was followed by using the AWS services Cognito and IAM to generate temporary credentials for users rather than hardcoding them. The intention was that users would not require accounts, so users are not authenticated by IAM. However, if in a full release this were to change, these services could be used for that purpose. Figure 9 shows a code snippet of the Identity Pool ID and region being supplied to the AWS config to allow access to AWS services.

A screen shot of a computer code

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure AWS Config submitted credentials to allow access to services

Two operations that can be performed on a DynamoDB table are Query, which uses the primary key index to search the table, and Scan which by default returns all items in the table but can have filters applied (Tankariya & Parmar, 2019). The Scan operation was used in a function called getServicesFromDatabase (figure 10) to retrieve all the items from the table and then passes the longitude and latitude of each service to another function called addMarkersToMap (figure 11) that was modified from the example provided by HERE. Figure 12 shows the result on the map with two markers placed after being retrieved from the database.

A screen shot of a computer program

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure getServicesFromDatabase function scanning a DynamoDB table to retrieve all data

A picture containing text, screenshot, font, line

Description automatically generated

Figure addMarkersToMap function accepting latitude & longitude in the argument

A map of a city

Description automatically generated

Figure Two markers added to the map after their data has been retrieved from the database

## 3.5 Implementing tags and info sidebar

The getItem operation returns a single item from the DynamoDB table using the partition key (the unique identifier for each entry in the table). The HERE maps markers can have arbitrary data associated with them, so when they are added to the map they can have the partition key for that service associated with them. An event listener then tracks when a marker is tapped and retrieves the information from the database for that service using the getItem operation, to insert into the sidebar. An ‘if’ function is used to check if the selected service is already selected to prevent unnecessary requests and therefore data usage.

As stated previously, Scan operations can have filter conditions applied so that only specific results are returned. The service tag buttons were created as checkboxes in the markup so that the user can mix and match which types of services they want to see displayed; and the gender tag buttons as radio buttons as they are exclusive choices. Each time one of the buttons is selected it triggers a JavaScript function which creates a filter expression based on the users’ choices using an IN operator (figure x), then creates a JSON object (figures y and z) which is sent with the scan request. Figure v shows the result with service filters being colour coded with the service types selected, and the info sidebar open after tapping one of the markers.



A computer screen with text and numbers

Description automatically generated

A black screen with white text

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a map

Description automatically generated

## 3.6 Directory search

The directory search was created in a similar manner to the previously described work with a scan function using the input from a search bar to create a filter expression, which searches the title and description columns in the DynamoDB table to find any matches, which are then displayed as shown in figure x. Unfortunately, it became apparent when testing the feature that the terms used for the filter expressions must be case sensitive, which presents a challenge as users may expect a search to be case insensitive. One possible work around would be to create a new column in the DynamoDB table with appropriate words stored in lowercase, then the search terms from the search bar converted to lowercase before being inserted into the filter expression. Due to time constraints this was not implemented for the project but will be considered for future work.

A screenshot of a web page

Description automatically generated

## 3.7 Events calendar

Events

# 4. Review

## 4.1 Current stage of project work

The primary feature of the app, the map of services and database has been completed and displays the contact information and information when selected. Additional services could be added to this, and the description information reviewed, and relevant permission sought where necessary, as discussed in section 1.3.

The styling is functional, as discussed in section x.

Further requirements elicitation could be undertaken, as discussed in section x,

The directory search needs keywords input to the database to make searching better. Alternatively a different database solution could be considered that would be more conducive to this.

The events calendar didn’t have enough to time to do extensive work, some prelimary work is discussed in the epilogue, section 5.

Prototyping and getting feedback from users to iterate on the design would be an important step that was omitted from the project due to time constraints.

Mobile testing on e.g. cordova

Timescales:

* Review content – 1 week
* Prototyping – 2 months
* Directory search updates – 1 week
* Events calendar – 2 months
* Mobile testing & dev – 2 weeks

Preliminary discussion has been undertaken regarding publishing the app, and since the primary feature is mostly complete this may be published mostly as is, as an immediate deliverable with further features added over the following 6 months.

## 4.2 Review of project management

### 4.2.1 Project lifecycle

The project lifecycle was initially conceived of as being a user-centre lifecycle with regular feedback from users in the trans community and an extensive use of prototyping. The first part of this that was planned was the requirements elicitation that was undertaken and documented in section 3.2. The plans for this were scaled back due to tutor feedback, as it was felt that collating and analysing all the data would be very challenging and time consuming. Additionally, the process of gathering feedback proved more challenging than anticipated than when the lifecycle was chosen, with 8 people agreeing to provide feedback, but only 3 ultimately completing the questionnaire. The exercise was ultimately successful and provided much useful information for the project, but it clearly indicated that a rethink was required in terms of the project lifecycle.

Further to this, conducting prototyping would take up significant amounts of time in designing it, conducting the research, and collating the feedback. The original plans were in retrospect a little ambitious in terms of the amount of time that some things would take and once the project was well underway it became apparent that the amount of time investment required to undertake the prototyping would mean that there would be significant sacrifices that would have to be made elsewhere in the project. Also, given that some user feedback had already been undertaken with the requirements elicitation, it was ultimately felt that this was not the highest priority.

For a full release of the app, feedback gathering and prototyping would be an essential part of the development. As a result, the project lifecycle has changed considerably over the course of the project and came to closer resemble an iterative waterfall with each task being evaluated and being iterated on as they were ongoing due to the nature of most of them being unfamiliar. Additionally, it resembled some agile methods with a serious of sprints producing a TMA as a deliverable, with a retrospective conducted via a 1-to-1 meeting with the tutor discussing the feedback for that TMA.

### 4.2.2 Resources, skills, and activities

* Representatives of services e.g. manager of a laser hair removal clinic
  + Can offer feedback about the events system and the ways in which users can contact their service.
  + May offer vital perspectives of how the app effects the community
* Members of the Liverpool trans community
  + Different members of the community may have different needs regarding accessing services.
  + Could offer feedback on prototypes of the app.
  + May be a source of information about services that should be included.
  + The Liverpool Trans Wiki may an essential source of community information about the services, as it documents many of them.
* Programming languages
  + JavaScript – proficient enough to tackle much of the proposed features, but some learning may be required as it will likely extend beyond current knowledge.
  + HTML – reasonably proficient, significant problems are not anticipated.
  + CSS – only minimal experience, may need some time to learn and to use trial and error to achieve goals.
* Cloud storage and version control
  + Microsoft OneDrive and GitHub can be used to backup files in the cloud and continue work between different devices. GitHub also provides version control with branching and reverting.
* DBaaS
  + AWS DynamoDB – A serverless database solution from Amazon that has a limited free access that is accessed through an online GUI via a browser.
  + Other AWS services to combine with DynamoDB such as Lambda, API Gateway, Cognito & IAM.
* Map
  + HERE Maps – Map solution accessed using an API after creating an account with HERE.
* Hardware
  + PC – used for coding, testing, writing up reports and conducting research.
  + Laptop – as above, but with portability. More focus on writing up reports, since other tasks are easier with a larger screen.
  + Phone – used for support with research, but also to test the app on a mobile device.
* Software
  + Chrome – Browser used for testing with developer tools, for investigating issues with code and to see how the app responds to different resolutions.
  + Visual Studio Code - A commonly used code editor that will be used throughout the project for all coding purposes.
  + CURL (Client URL) – for testing and using API’s using the command line.
  + Discord – a bot can be used to gather information for the events calendar.

### 4.2.3 Risk management

The goal of risk management is to identify, mitigate and minimise risks prior to them becoming a threat to the successful completion of the project (Hughes, 2012). The first part of managing risk is to identify and assess potential risks, considering how likely they are to occur and the severity of their impact. Table 4 (Open University, 2023b) considers risks for the project and labels them so they may more easily be referred to for the risk management process.

Table Project-specific risks

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Label** | **Project Activity** | **Risk Description** | **Likelihood (low, medium, high)** | **Impact (low, medium, high)** |
| R1 | Feedback from service providers for requirements elicitation and prototyping | Providers may be busy and not wish to engage with giving feedback or may only engage in a limited way. | Medium | Medium |
| R2 | Feedback from service users for requirements elicitation and prototyping. | The feedback given by users may be not useful or relevant if questions don’t properly direct users or may miss vital feedback if questions are too closed. | High | Medium |
| R3 | Feedback from service users for requirements elicitation and prototyping. | Users may not wish to engage with giving feedback or may only engage in a limited way. | Low | High |
| R4 | Coding the application. | Attempting to code non-routine tasks may cause significant delay. | High | Medium |
| R5 | Using Visual Studio Code | Since this is the first time using this software, there may be some adjustment time to using it causing delays. | Medium | Low |
| R6 | Storing data in the cloud | Data loss in the cloud, which could be due to several reasons including accidental deletion and server failure. | Low | High |
| R7 | Installing and setting up a database | The task may take longer than anticipated, since previous work with databases was after it had been set up, so skills development required. | Medium | Medium |
| R8 | Unexpected Illness | Time could be lost to illness, including potentially at a critical time such as in the run up to a TMA deadline. | Low | Medium |
| R9 | Hardware failure | A sudden mechanical failure requiring the repair or replacement of a piece of hardware | Low | Medium |
| R10 | Undertaking project tasks in the run up to the EMA | Tasks such as the Events Calendar prove more time consuming than anticipated and could impact the amount of time spent on the final EMA write up. | Medium | High |

The next stage of managing risk is to identify which risks are most important to address, so the likelihood and impact of each risk have been combined in a probability impact grid, as shown by Hughes, but instead of a ‘Line of Tolerance’, the grid (shown in table 5) has been colour-coded to indicate the most crucial risks to address with red and orange being most critical and to be addressed with urgency and in detail; yellow important to be addressed as much as feasible; green being least important and the risk may be accepted or only convenient mitigations undertaken. Risks 2 and 4 have been identified as the most crucial and mitigating them will form notable parts of the project; whereas risks 5, 8 and 9 have been identified as the least crucial and will be accepted without mitigation.

Table Probability Impact Grid

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Impact** | *High* | 3, 6 | 10 |  |
| *Medium* | 8, 9 | 1, 7 | 2, 4 |
| *Low* |  | 5 |  |
|  | *Low* | *Medium* | *High* |
| **Probability** | | | |

Table 8 showing the mitigating actions that were taken for each risk and explains what happened. In most cases the mitigating actions were effective, but risk R1 still occurred as far fewer people completed the feedback questionnaire for requirements than anticipated and the mitigating action of identifying likely respondents was unsuccessful. This resulted in adjusting the project and analysis to compensate as discussed previously.

Table Mitigating action and the results of identified risks

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Label** | **Mitigating Actions** | **Result** |
| R1 | Identify people most likely to provide feedback and be respectful of their time to get as much out of any engagements as possible | The most likely service provider to provide feedback was identified and engaged with, but personal reasons meant they had to drop out of the requirements elicitation study. Since mitigation failed adjustment to the analysis was necessary, so the requirements elicitation still went ahead without this stakeholder group and future work suggested to engage with other stakeholders. |
| R2 | Questionnaire to be carefully designed to facilitate getting high quality feedback. | The feedback was good quality and useful information was gained, so mitigation of carefully considering the questionnaire was successful. |
| R3 | Undertake feedback gathering as soon as possible, attempt to identify most likely candidates to participate and consider changes to project lifecycle if necessary. | This partially occurred, with less users participating than anticipated; however, this only had a minimal effect on the analysis and changes to the project lifecycle were made to reduce reliance on gathering feedback. |
| R4 | A skills development plan will be implemented, particularly for CSS & databases. | Skills development was undertaken for CSS and using the AWS services such as DynamoDB. |
| R5 | No mitigation to be undertaken. The primary purpose of the software is very similar to other code editors, and any shortcuts learned will only speed up tasks. | Over time increased familiarity of VS Code resulted in increasing the ease of use. |
| R6 | Data will be stored locally on two machines (PC & laptop) as well as in the cloud, so there is no single point of failure. | No data loss occurred. |
| R7 | Begin working on this early in the project to ensure there is time to work through any issues. | A lot of consideration was given to the choice of database from early on in the project, with the database implemented fairly early on so plenty of time was available to learn how to use DynamoDB, and very few issues were encountered once the database had been setup. |
| R8 | No mitigation to be undertaken but contact with tutor to be maintained so that an extension can be requested if necessary. | Unexpected illness caused a week’s delay around the time of a TMA deadline, but an extension was requested and granted, so disruption was minimal. |
| R9 | No mitigation to be undertaken, if either the PC or laptop were to suddenly fail then the other could be used as backup. | No hardware failure occurred. |
| R10 | Discuss the remaining tasks with tutor to prioritise and set a hard cut off after which no further work on the app will be done. | N/A |

As the final deadline for the EMA approached, the risks R6 and R9 became increasingly important as data loss or losing the ability to write up the report could have been catastrophic. However, the mitigation of using GitHub made the likely impact of sudden data loss to be only a single day or half a day’s work as the version control was used to submit data after each session to ensure that all devices were up to date. Risk R10 is also crucial for the next phase of the project to ensure that there is enough time to write up the final EMA report, so this risk will have to be closely monitored in the coming weeks.

Reword to make sense in context, particularly risks for TMA03->EMA

## 4.3 Personal development

During the project two skills development activities were undertaken, firstly for using CSS to style the app, as detailed in sections in 2.3 and 3.3; and for using and setting up AWS DynamoDB as detailed in sections 2.4 and 3.4. These activities were crucial in the progress of the project, particularly using DynamoDB as without a database the application would not function.

Ongoing communication with the tutor was a crucial aspect of sustaining progress with the project and was maintained well throughout with updates provided at on at least a 2-weekly basis. Personal issues made this more challenging during April, and ultimately resulted in an extension being required for TMA02. After each TMA a 1-to-1 meeting with the tutor was organised, as well as attending or watching the recording of the tutorials, and regular questions were asked when required. A record of these interactions has been recorded in table 7.

Table Table of communications

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Format** | **Details** |
| 26/1/23 | Email | Introduction and link to forum post with initial project idea |
| 27/1/23 | Zoom chat | Discussed further thoughts on the initial idea |
| 30/1/23 | Zoom chat | Agreed Zoom meeting |
| 2/2/23 | Zoom meeting | Discussed initial ideas and how to move forward to TMA01 |
| 9/2/23 | Tutorial | TMA01 |
| 11/2/23 | Zoom chat | Updated tutor with progress |
| 17/2/23 | Zoom chat | Asked for help with finding information about a database used in a previous module |
| 28/2/23 | Zoom chat | Updated tutor with progress |
| 10/3/23 | Zoom chat | Question about legal/ethical implications of requirements elicitation |
| 16/3/23 | Zoom chat | Arranged zoom meeting to discuss TMA01 feedback and asked a question about anonymity with requirements elicitation |
| 16/3/23 | Zoom meeting | Discussed feedback from TMA01 and how to move forward to TMA02 |
| 22/3/23 | Zoom chat | Sent consent form and participant information sheet to get feedback |
| 24/3/23 | Zoom chat | Sent consent form and participant information sheet again after acting on feedback to get the go ahead to proceed |
| 4/4/23 | Tutorial | Watched the recording of the TMA02 tutorial as I was unable to be present at the live event |
| 8/4/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress |
| 23/4/23 | Email | Extension request for TMA02 due to personal circumstances |
| 9/5/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress and arranged zoom meeting |
| 12/5/23 | Zoom meeting | Discussed feedback from TMA02 and how to move forward to TMA03 |
| 16/5/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress and asked a question regarding setting up API’s in AWS |
| 31/5/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress |
| 5/6/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress |
| 8/6/23 | Tutorial | TMA03 |
| 16/6/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress |
| 22/6/23 | Zoom chat | Asked a question on referencing for the AWS documentation |
| 28/6/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress |
| 13/7/23 | Zoom meeting | Discussed feedback from TMA03 and next steps moving towards EMA |
| 26/7/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress |
| 1/8/23 | Zoom chat | Asked a question about EDI & LESPI sections for EMA |
| 3/8/23 | Tutorial | EMA |
| 11/8/23 | Zoom chat | Asked a question regarding EMA write up |
| 26/8/23 | Zoom chat | Update on progress & asked a question regarding EMA write up |

# 5. Epilogue

# 6. References

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# 7. Appendices

## 7.1 Appendix A: Questionnaire

![Text, letter

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Figure Questionnaire pg1

![Text

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Figure Questionnaire pg2

![Table

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Figure Questionnaire pg3

![Text

Description automatically generated]()

Figure Questionnaire pg4

## 7.2 Appendix B: Consent Form

![A close-up of a document

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Figure Consent form pg1

![A close-up of a document

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()

Figure Consent form pg2

![A close-up of a questionnaire

Description automatically generated with low confidence]()

Figure Consent form pg3

![A close-up of a document

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()

Figure Consent form pg4

![A close-up of a form

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()

Figure Consent form pg5

## 7.3 Appendix C: Participant information sheet

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Figure Participant information sheer pg1

![A picture containing text, screenshot, font, letter

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Figure Participant information sheer pg2

![A close-up of a document

Description automatically generated with low confidence]()

Figure Participant information sheer pg3

## 7.4 Appendix D: Requirements elicitation full analysis

Responses indicated that FR1, FR2 and FR5 all were valid for this stakeholder group and will remain unchanged, some key quotes are:

* *“it would allow me to find what services are nearest rather than just what services are beat advertised”* (FR1).
* “Yes it would help to find what is accessible nearby especially if someone can’t access support during the day due to commitments or work” (FR2)
* “Yes, searching by the name/description of the service would be good” (FR5)

A stakeholder need was also identified from this feedback:

* *N1.1: Finding a service that I need to access*

This is the core need that the app is attempting to fulfil, and all respondents rated this as of high importance to them. All respondents felt that there was some difficulty for them in finding and accessing the services that are available to them.

FR3 elicited a lot of suggestions about how it might be delivered, perhaps suggesting that it was vaguely worded. The feedback also indicated that users would value personalising their use of the app to tailor to their individual situation. As discussed in section 3.3, there are different experiences under the ‘trans umbrella’ that the app should try to cater for, such as transfeminine, transmasculine and non-binary. A key quote is:

* *“I wondered about a tag could be selected to specify services intended for specific people ie just trans women/men like make up support”* (FR3)

Therefore, FR3 has been amended to:

* *FR3: have tags to show or hide the services displayed on the map, based on type of service and the gender identities they provide for.*

Additionally, a stakeholder need was identified from this feedback:

* *N1.2: Personalise the experience of finding services to my identity*

For FR6 there was a lot of feedback that users find it difficult to find out about events because they are spread across multiple places such as Facebook groups and discord servers. It highlights a problem that with this functional requirement that in delivering it there would be a risk that this would be simply ‘another place where events can be created’ and would potentially exacerbate the problem that users have rather than improving it. A key quote is:

* *“It’s hard to keep track of events, some are on Facebook, some by discord, so a central location would be lovely”* (FR6)

Therefore, FR6 has been amended to:

* *FR6: collate existing events for the community from other sources, in a calendar.*

A need was also identified:

* *N1.3: Find out about community events*

Previously it has been stressed that maintaining privacy and safety of users is crucial to the project, both from a moral and reputational point of view. This community anxiety is highlighted by an unpromoted in response to the question about the filter tags:

* "not sure if this might allow terfs to find and cause problems for those services/users who attend that place?”

This is an important consideration for the app fundamentally, that while increasing the visibility of services is a positive thing for the trans community, that visibility may also increase for those who would do the community harm. However, this does not require change to NFR1 and other feedback indicated that this requirement was valid. A key quote is:

* “it would help with feeling safer particularly before coming out” (NFR1)

A need was also identified:

*N4: Maintain my safety and privacy when using it*

Feedback also indicated that FR4 was not important to users, as they have other apps they use to give them directions. Additionally, many services require some interaction or planning before using them, so a user would not likely go to the service directly and instead make an appointment. A key quote is:

* “Not particularly useful to me as I use google maps for navigation. A simple link to a maps provider would do for me” (FR4)

Therefore, FR4 has been removed entirely.

## 7.5 Appendix E: Testing the API’s

Th API were tested using the CURL command line tool, and figure 4 shows the use of the PUT function adding 3 items to the DynamoDB table with the result shown in the AWS Dashboard GUI in figure 5 and with two GET requests in the command line, one for all the table and one for a specific ID. The item with ID = 124 is deleted using the DELETE command and the result is shown again using a GET request and in the GUI in figure 6.

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Figure Testing of the API's using the CURL command line tool

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Figure Table in the AWS GUI after 3 PUT requests

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Figure Table in the AWS GUI after a DELETE request for item with ID=124