CPSC 481 Group Assignment

Stage 2

Project Description

Our project idea is a content sharing platform named InspireUs that focuses on a system of creative prompts. The platform will share global prompts with the users and encourage them to create content that shares its theming with the prompts, under a fixed deadline. The platform will support all kinds of content including, but not limited to, art, music, videos, stories, and video games.

Prompts will be separated into three categories that are updated accordingly: daily prompts, weekly prompts, and monthly prompts. There will be three separate feeds for these categories that users can both upload their content to and view the content of others. The feeds can be filtered by the type of content (e.g. artwork, text, video) and options such as "Most Popular" and "Newest". Once a prompt feed is updated, the old prompt is archived along with every piece of content that was posted for it. There will be a short grace period where a user can still post content to an archived feed, though the feed will no longer be featured prominently by the platform.

If a user wishes to view the content of specific content creators that they like, they can choose to follow them. An additional, fourth feed will display content created by content creators that the user follows, completely independent of the prompts. Any content that is posted can be liked, commented on, and shared with other websites or users.

We expect our system to be used primarily by content creators looking to share their work, gain inspiration to create content, or challenge themselves with timed events. We also expect a large amount of users to be people who simply enjoy viewing content. Other users include administrators and moderators.

Stakeholders

Our group of stakeholders that would benefit from our system would be Consumers, Companies, and Organizations.

We define consumers as users who enjoy viewing the works posted on the platform. They may follow specific creators, and like and comment on posted work. Consumers could directly benefit from InspireUs, whether they create content or not. Creators would be able to gain inspiration from our platform as well as post their content on our platform for the community to enjoy. Non-Creators would be able to still enjoy the platform by

viewing content from those that are creating, and supporting their work. They would be important to the design, as they would be the main users of the system.

Companies can benefit from our platform by using it to discover creators that they may be interested in working with. They could look for the specific type of creator that can create content in the medium that they desire. It would be important for us to keep them in mind as they have a unique view that requires easy navigation of the system.

Other organizations may want to use our system to host events or contests. There are existing creative prompt-based events, such as Inktober, that may want to collaborate with our platform to increase exposure for the event and have a convenient place to archive all submissions.

User Research

Our chosen research methods were interviews and personas. We decided to use interviews to gather information because we wanted to focus on a particular group of users - content creators. By interviewing a variety of creators, we received in-depth information about their experience in their chosen field and existing platforms they use to share content. The format of an interview is more open-ended than surveys, so we were able to ask for more details depending on the type of work they do, and got a better sense of the challenges different types of content creators face.

[Link to Questionnaire and Interviews](#)

Our interview questions mainly asked about the current platforms people use to post and view creative media. Interviewees mentioned a wide range of sites including Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and Github. Most people said they enjoyed using these sites to see what kinds of things other people created, and were interested in a variety of content. We asked what they liked about the platforms and what could be improved. For what people liked, some aspects mentioned were a visually appealing layout, convenience, and a feeling of community. Areas for improvement depended on the site, but some points were greater ease of use, archiving features, and more ways to gain exposure.

With content creators, we also asked how they felt about using prompts for inspiration. Most people we interviewed said they often had creative slumps, and agreed that prompts could be useful for their work. Many had also participated in or expressed interest in timed events themed around a prompt. When we asked if they

would like to use a platform like InspireUs, everyone we interviewed said it seemed interesting and that they would try it out.

[Link to Personas](#)

We chose to use personas to complement and consolidate the results of our interviews. Personas were picked because they allowed us to summarize the data gained from interviews, and characterize the diverse types of users of our system. They also helped us imagine scenarios in which people would use our platform. Our personas have different interests, levels of experience, and goals when using InspireUs, to reflect the variety of people we interviewed.

"Abigail" is a freelance artist with an existing followerbase; she relies on online networking to market her work, so she values exposure and posts regularly. In contrast, "Piper" is a young computer science student interested in game development and art. She uses InspireUs more as a way to practice her skills and learn from others in a friendly environment, so the community aspect is important to her. Lastly, "Mark" is a professor who is an expert in the unique art of screen printing. He uses InspireUs as a means to share screen printing with a wider audience, and as an online portfolio for his work. He values the ability to track his progress over time, and provide inspiration to his students by posting his creations. Each of these Personas gave some insight into the needs that the users of our platform may have.

Reflection

The interviews and personas went fairly well. They provided us with great insight as to what stakeholders want, and how we should continue forward. The interviews gave us knowledge of different people's mindsets, which we could apply in order to put ourselves in their shoes and create personas. We also learned about the advantages and disadvantages of existing platforms, which aids our design process. Meanwhile, creating personas allowed us to broaden our perspectives, and help us branch out from our interview results and grow our ideas.

We would have liked to complete more interviews, with a greater range of content creators and consumers, but the limited time prevented us from doing so. This also limited the number of personas we could create. For our interviews, one flaw is that we sometimes received short responses that were less informative, so we could have developed more engaging questions to generate more detailed discussion.

Task Descriptions

1. Rachel is an artist that is looking for a new project to work on. She checks the platform and it opens to the "Daily Prompt" feed. She wants more time to work on her piece so she goes over to the "Weekly Prompt" feed. The weekly prompt is "Fire and Ice", she briefly scrolls through the feed, looking at the already submitted content until she finds inspiration and gets to work on her own piece. A few days later, Rachel has created a piece of digital art. She opens the platform and posts her piece on the "Weekly Prompt" feed, along with a little description. Within a few minutes, her post starts getting likes and comments.

2. Anthony is a 3D-Modeller that wants to challenge his skill. He opens up the platform and checks the "Daily Prompt" feed just before it updates for the new day. As soon as it does, he gets to work on creating the best looking 3D model he can within 24 hours to fit the daily theme, "Glass". He works all day on the model and just as he's about to finish, he passes out from exhaustion. When he wakes up, he realizes that the day has now passed and the daily feed has updated its theme once again! He scrambles onto the website and, luckily, the grace period is still active for the now archived daily feed that he wanted to post on. He posts his 3D model onto it, along with a description, and even though that feed is archived, it still gets a surprising amount of likes and comments.

3. Sam is an aspiring animator who creates short animated videos for the InspireUs weekly and monthly prompts. He is new to sharing his work online and posts infrequently, so he does not have many followers yet. One day, he discovers that someone has blatantly traced over several frames of one of his older submissions, altering it slightly to match the current weekly prompt. This person did not ask Sam for permission or credit him, and their post has become far more popular than his original work. Sam reports the post for plagiarism, explaining the situation by filling out a short form. It is later removed by the site moderators.

4. John has just recently heard of InspireUs. He is interested in the concept and wishes to register. John goes to the InspireUs home page and chooses "Sign Up" to create an account. After filling out the required fields, he registers and verifies

his account by email. He is faced with an optional guide (possibly a video guide) that shows/guides him through the basic navigation of the app/website.

5. Nicole loves viewing people's creations, specifically digital art. While scrolling through the daily prompt feed, she sees a piece with a unique art style that she finds really cute and enjoyable. She wishes to see more of this artist's work, so she clicks on the piece that initially intrigued her. Once doing so, she finds information about the work (artist's profile, when they submitted it, a small description provided by artist, the corresponding prompt related to the piece, etc.) She then clicks the artist's profile, which brings up a portfolio of work they have completed. Nicole likes what she sees on the page and wishes to see more like it in the future, she follows the artist and will be notified in the future when this artist posts again.

6. Justin is a computer science student who wishes to make games in the future. He is told that some small games are being posted on InspireUs, and he wishes to see these posts, but is not interested in any other type of work. After creating his account, Justin navigates to the monthly prompt feed, as he wants to view games that have had more time put into them. Here, he goes to the filter options, and selects "Games". The filter refreshes the page and now filters out anything that is not in the "Games" section, allowing Justin to view what he wanted without being shown pieces he does not care about.

7. Clair is a writer who prefers spending more time on her work so that she always posts high quality stories. Thus, she does not participate in the daily prompts, but does look for weekly and monthly prompts. She wants reminders for when a new prompt is up so that she can start thinking of ideas early. Clair clicks on her user profile and chooses to edit her Account Settings. She goes into the Notifications tab and turns notifications on for weekly and monthly prompts, then saves her settings. Clair will receive a web notification saying what the new prompts are when the prompts rotate.