Literature Review

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# Abstract

What Should I Do Now is an activity suggester that we are creating to curb boredom. People of all ages experience boredom every now and then, and this leads to feelings of dullness, emptiness, and lack of purpose. The feeling of boredom can be easily cured by finding new interests or hobbies. We aim to create a solution that is accessible to everyone and makes it easy to find new things to do. What Should I do Now is a website that takes inputs from users and turns them into activities that suit your personal desires.

We assume that during the developmental phase of our project that we will have access to tools used for creating and facilitating a website. These include coding languages like JavaScript, HTML, and CSS as well as utilizing services like NodeJS to build and run the site. We have a couple constraints with the main being that we as a team need to meet virtually on a schedule to complete the entire project, as well as meet an August deadline.

There are a few stakeholders involved in the project. The highest priority stakeholder with the most interest and execution power is the production team. Other parties interested in the outcome of the final service are the product testers and the end users. Users will be interested because What Should I Do Now? has the potential to alleviate some of their boredom and decision-making problems.

# Introduction

Boredom is something everyone experiences almost on a daily basis. It can be described as being disinterested in your surroundings, the feeling of having nothing to do, and an overall dull feeling. Boredom can be agitating, and mentally draining (Dewar, 2022). Some of the easiest ways to cure boredom are to find a new hobby or change up your routine. However sometimes when you're so bored you can’t gather the headspace to figure out what to do, so we came up with an easily accessible and unique solution to the problem.

Our solution is to create a website that anyone can access with suggestions to cure your boredom. Once greeted by our activity suggester, the user can search for new activities, and get personalized input on what they could do. Through a series of prompts with questions like “How is your mood today” the activity suggester will output unique suggestions tailored toward the user. Sometimes it's hard to think of something new and exciting that you can just pick up and roll with. With an easy creatable solution like the activity suggester, finding new forms of entertainment and interest will be easy.

# Assessment

Being bored is something that happens to everyone. Every human has experienced it in some way, shape, or form. The only available solution that somebody can think of off the top of their head is participating in a hobby they have or doing something that is already in their schedule (and that is if they have a busy schedule). These types of situations prevent people from feeling boredom, and this in turn curbs the negative side effects and negative consequences from not having anything to do.

Since there is no readily available solution regarding how to approach boredom and how to avoid the negative effects associated with too much leisure time, a product like ours would be a viable tool that would aid in finding something to do at a moment's notice. It is important to stay busy and having a readily available alternative to doing nothing certainly will benefit the average individual that struggles with an experience like this.

## Pros and Cons

The main benefit of having a solution like this is that it will come up with an activity to do at a moment's notice. This will effectively stop boredom if the user chooses to do the activity suggested. A major advantage of this product is that it is designed to suggest an activity that a user would be inclined to do since it is based off user input. This increases the likelihood of their user liking the suggested activity and in turn actually participating in the activity suggested. If a user chooses to participate in an activity suggested by our product, then they would not be bored since they would be preoccupied with carrying out the activity. Research studies indicate that people feel negative effects of boredom such as depression and substance abuse when they are doing an activity that has low physical or mental engagement (Weir, 2013). Since these activities are engaging either physically or mentally, the chance that the user would encounter feelings of negativity are generally low. These suggestions are designed to keep a user’s body or mind engaged while performing an activity that the user is likely to enjoy, in order to minimize boredom and negative feelings associated with it as much as possible. The desired outcome of this is to curb any negative feelings associated with boredom and boredom in general at a moment's notice.

Although there are mainly benefits associated with this product, there are some drawbacks to consider. People are not perfect, and most humans tend to draw conclusions before consulting with professionals when it comes to their mental state. One potential drawback associated with this tool is the fact that there is a possibility that people suffering from mental illness(es) such as depression will try to use this as a form of self-medication and ultimately not get the help they need to treat their condition(s). Since this is designed to provide immediate satisfaction, there might be the chance that people do not end up getting treatment they should get to better themselves medically. Another potential drawback is the possibility of a user not finding an activity suggested to be of enough interest to do. This would make our product redundant; although the possibility of this happening is low, the user is in control of their own actions and this is certainly a possibility. Regardless if they do not do it due to lack of interest or lack of motivation, if they do not find an activity they would like to do then our tool would be ineffective.

# Potential Approach

How we will approach the project is to develop the site appearance and functionality simultaneously, with minor exceptions. The front end and the back end will be developed together. The goal is to create a minimally viable product as quickly as possible that can be added to and improved upon as the project progresses. Testing will be performed periodically throughout the process as elements are created.

The project will be completed using available open-source technologies to minimize costs. The code will be maintained in a GitHub repository with team member access. The site will most likely be hosted through the static site generator Vercel. Another option is integrating with the GitHub Pages functionality to display the service.

Code will mainly be produced in HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. The components of the service will mostly be composed of microservices using tools in NodeJS and web elements available from Lit. Keeping these libraries and the languages simple will allow for assuming greater compatibility across browsers and combatting other common issues. It will also allow for easier understanding for people outside the project.

The site makeup will be representative of a questionnaire, displaying a series of card-like pages with buttons for different options on them. The buttons or links will each lead to another page in the set. These pages will be made from a template and modified for each question or option. As the pages are created, the linkages between them will be implemented as they become available.

Once the pages of the main questions and options are implemented, there are a few other possible features. We have discussed adding a random button and a search function as expanded functionality. We will also be updating the front end to improve the aesthetics and styles of the service at this time.

References

Weir, K. (2013, July-August). *Never a dull moment.* American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2013/07-08/dull-moment>.

Dewar, K. (2022, April 22). *5 facts about boredom.* Counselwise. <https://counselwise.ca/five-facts-about-boredom/>