

Topic: Animal Shelter Resource Allocator

Author: María H. Cotto Nieves

Date: 01/31/2023

Student Number: 802-39-2445

1. Problem Background

- Animal shelters in Puerto Rico require different types of resources to aid their mission of providing care for rescued pets. Usually, they post their needs on an individual basis on social media. The lack of an aggregate posting of shelter needs makes it difficult for volunteers to find different opportunities for helping out.
- In 2021, the newspaper Primera Hora published that -though no animal census has been undertaken- it is estimated that 1,500,000 cats and dogs are living in the streets of Puerto Rico.
- Resources needed for helping animal welfare organizations can benefit from increased communication and engagement between volunteers and organizations in order to match up their needs and offerings.

2. Target

- The goal to be achieved is to create a free tool that will allow donors and volunteers to better provide money, time and/or labor to animal shelter organizations. Additionally, animal shelter organizations will be able to communicate activities that require volunteer help.

3. Causes

Animal shelters have an unmet need for donations and resources to help aid their mission of providing care for rescued pets.

WHY?

Not enough people receive timely and accurate information to help out and provide resources to animal shelters.

WHY?

People receive requests for help from animal shelters outside their geographic area of interest, or after fundraising events have happened.

WHY?

Animal shelters rely on free social media, such as Facebook, to communicate their needs, but these posts do not reach their intended audience.

WHY?

Organic unpaid social media posts are not necessarily tailored to communicate its content to an animal shelter's target audience.

WHY?

Social media companies prioritize paid content over organic posts, increasing visibility of the first in detriment of the other.

4. Countermeasures

- Allow community members to identify as shelter organizations, donors, transportation volunteers, fundraising events volunteers, foster homes and forever homes and select geographical locations of interest.
- Animal shelter organizations will post targeted announcements for pets looking for foster and forever homes.
- Animal shelter organizations and volunteers will be able to match with each other for fundraising events.
- Volunteers will be able to post their availability to foster or adopt a pet.
- Volunteers and organizations in need of transporting a pet from one location to another will be able to improve their search for a "bridge".

5. Check/Evaluate (What result would solve the problem)

- The project's success will be determined by factors such as continued growth of tool use and user engagement.
- On the other hand, project failure will be denoted by a significant drop in active users and/or disengagement from activities sponsorship.
- The centralized approach will be more effective in matching needs and resources, decreasing the number of pets in need of fostering and permanent homes.

6. Act/Standardize

- Continuous success will be ensured by further promoting the tool on social media, through word of mouth and animal shelter networks. It is necessary to continue developing accessibility and capabilities, so users may continue engaging with the tool.
- By the end of the project, the team will have acquired improved programming language and framework usage skills, as well as invaluable experience in designing, developing, and launching a "product" for commercial use.