Keio University (India Japan Laboratory) in collaboration with Indian Institute of Science (Center for Society and Policy) calls for

SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE

(Phase 2: Proposal submission)

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION: 1 DECEMBER 2020

1. Basic Information

Theme Area	Urbanisation
Title	Prithvi
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2. Details of Group Members

S.No.	Name of group members	University / Organization	Program (UG or PG) / Year	Discipline	Email
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3. Theme Background

Nature is expendable, but till the last decade we have treated it like it isn't. We have exploited natural resources without thinking of the consequences. Now, with increasing awareness about sustainable development, companies are coming up with ecologically friendly practices to develop products. However, since these ecologically friendly practices are costly, most major companies choose not to adopt them. Companies that do, generally have low profits.

Although there has been growing consumer awareness about sustainable development, most consumers don't buy eco-friendly products. The reasons for this are that it isn't easy to find data about which products are truly eco-friendly, and the companies that make such products find it tough to advertise due to already high costs of production. Thus, it takes time and effort for the consumer to actually find a green alternative for the product they want. This lack of connection between consumers and eco-friendly products ends up reducing the demand supply ratio, which makes it harder for the suppliers to mass produce green products and work towards sustainable development.

4. Describe your Social Innovation Idea, and its key characteristics.

Prithvi is a Google Chrome extension that performs a very simple task that has far reaching effects - when enabled, a search to buy a product returns results that are ecologically sustainable. Our Google Chrome extension, Prithvi, shows you a list of sustainable options for what you just googled. Designed to be used on searches to buy household products, we aim to help you make your life better for the health of the planet, with just one extra click. Here is what the extension offers

- **Sustainable options of search results:** Clicking on the extension displays all the sustainable options for the search just made.
- **Pop up window:** Clicking on the extension displays a new popup window with the desired result
- **Links to verified eco friendly products:** The links displayed are from a trusted database of products and companies that care about the cause.
- **Free of charge:** Our Google Chrome extension is completely free of charge. We connect consumers to eco-friendly products without charging any money from either the consumer or the supplier.
- **Accessibility to the masses:** Our idea is a simple Google extension. Thus it is available and accessible by anyone that owns a device that has the Chrome browser.
- **Easy usage:** The extension is extremely easy to use. You just have to search for your product on google, like you normally would, and they would be given all the eco-friendly alternatives in a pop up window.
- **Privacy:** The user's data is safe and secure with us. There will be no third-party access to information.
- **Lightweight:** The size of the program is small and doesn't require much space in the device at all.

4.1. What is the Novelty / Uniqueness of your Social Innovation Idea?

Every one of us has had this thought at some point - maybe after a particularly depressing article about whales dying, or after experiencing the horrible pollution our cities see every day - "I want to live greener!". But we haven't really had any idea how to actually do that. **What makes our idea unique is that it helps facilitate and bring to life the change in the thinking of the consumers.** Many of us read blogs and articles about the environment and sustainable living, but our idea will help users actually take actions that lead to a greener planet. There are blog posts and articles that list "50 things in your house you can swap to be greener", but those handmade options don't really work as well as an industrially manufactured product. Our idea is a one stop solution - a platform that showcases eco-friendly products actively while people are looking for them, and **encourages sustainability in design** of products, while also giving **ease of access** to our users.

4.2. Explain the relevance of your Social Innovation Idea to address the current social problems.

Climate change is the defining issue of our time. We need to act now, otherwise adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly. The best approach to this is aiming for **sustainable development**, in order to effectively use our resources and preserve the planet for future generations. A lot of people want to "go green" and help in sustaining the environment, but many of those people don't actively search for green alternatives to fulfil their daily life requirements. This extension makes green alternatives easily accessible and helps people buy products with an eco-friendly awareness. Prithvi not only helps people help the environment without putting in extra effort, but also raises awareness and a sense of appreciation for the businesses that are eco-friendly - businesses that focus on green initiatives for their workspace, employees, and products prioritize the health of the planet and environment. These deserve to be recognized and appreciated. Going green and **working together** is the only way we can hope to achieve sustainable development.

4.3. Explain the effectiveness of your Social Innovation Idea/ Concept

In today's busy world, one rarely takes the time to think about switching to a sustainable alternative for a daily use product. Our idea not only saves time but makes it extremely easy for even a non-tech savvy person to add the extension and use it. Now it will just take a **button click** to find eco-friendly alternatives instead of searching for companies or products and taking hours to find a product made with ecologically sustainable methods. Prithvi can easily be used by anyone in **any corner of the world**, and is simple and easy to use. This ease will actually connect the aware consumers to the eco-friendly companies. This will create more demand for eco friendly products, which will be a huge step towards the global aim of sustainable development. Our idea will make a difference to the environment in many ways - from having a **long term positive impact** on the planet to the immediate benefits of lowering costs by reducing energy consumption, cutting down on waste and restoring a healthy atmosphere.

4.4. Is your Social Innovation Idea ecologically sustainable? Please elaborate.

Yes, since our product is a **software application**, it has little or no impact on the environment. It is made using a programming language, and doesn't directly exploit any ecological resource. The only possible impact on the environment is due to the pre-existing impact that production of computers and mobile phones have. Since our software doesn't require extra computers/devices, it does not have any additional impact on the environment at all. Our idea is not only ecologically sustainable but also ecologically beneficial. It will help make a paradigm shift in consumer choice to sustainable products.

4.5. What is the scale of impact of your Social innovation idea? Is it widely applicable?

Every shopping site has a feature to filter products on the basis of price/discount.
Consumers are therefore always shopping on the basis of features, price, discount, and availability.
Consider the possibility of filtering products on the basis of their eco-friendliness? This will provide a new perspective to consumers as they would be exposed to a whole new market of green alternatives to their traditional products. We will achieve two goals by doing so - consumer awareness and marketing of green products.
By providing an algorithm to help consumers have a catalogue of green products, we are increasing the probability of the shift from traditional products to greener alternatives.
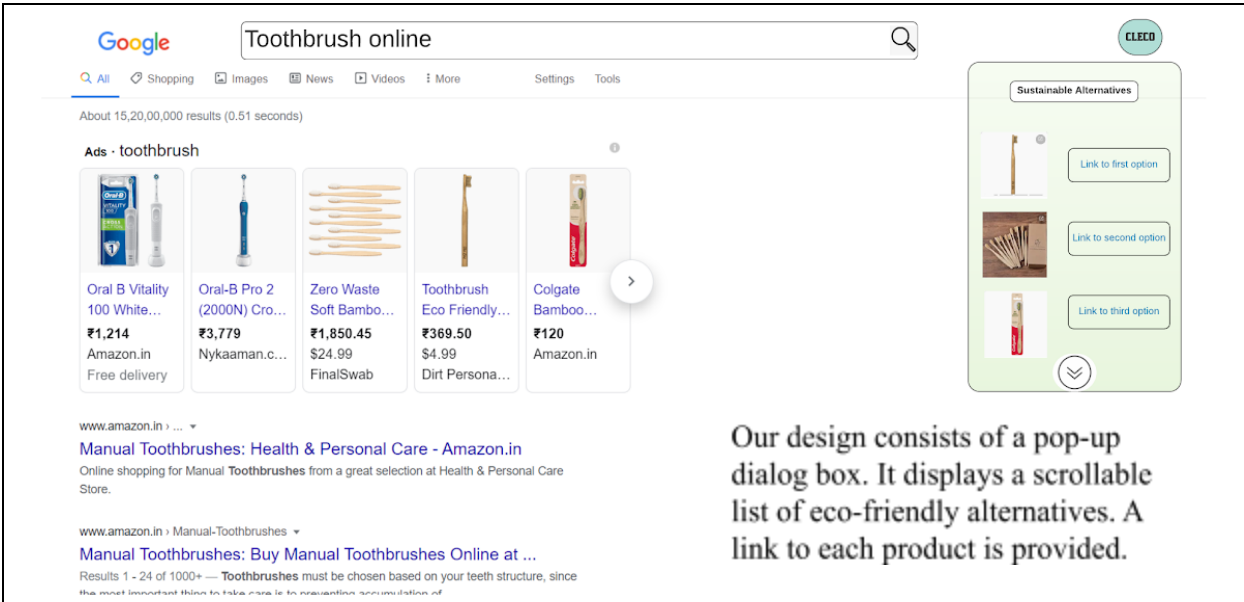Therefore, the scale of impact of our social innovation idea ranges to every individual using the internet to buy a product online.
We plan to deploy this idea with the help of a google chrome extension. Therefore if a person has the basic knowledge required to search something on Google, they can easily apply this filter to their searches. This makes our idea widely applicable.

5. Annexes

Please put any additional information and reference documents that you would like to share related to your social innovation idea like technical details, weblinks, proof of concept, photo of the model etc.

1. What are extensions?
2. SPOT - Sustainable Product Database
3. Sustainable and Eco Products and Services: A Database of Databases
4. How to programmatically open a chrome extension popup window from background.htmlCreate and publish custom Chrome apps & extensions
5. Link to Survey Responses A Greener Lifestyle (Responses)

Our design consists of a pop-up dialog box. It displays a scrollable list of eco-friendly alternatives. A link to each product is provided.

How often do you buy products online?(162 responses)

A high percentage of consumers buy products online. Since the onset of the pandemic, people prefer online buying as opposed to offline buying.

Do you consciously make an effort to live sustainably and/or buy eco friendly products? (162 responses)

Almost half of the people said that they don't make a conscious effort, which is something that our product can change.

What do you think are the reasons that you do not use more eco-friendly products? (162 responses)

The most common reasons to not buy sustainable products was that they were not easily available, and that they were expensive. Our extension gives businesses that make such products more visibility, and hence more business, driving costs down. Other frequently cited reasons were that there simply weren't enough options, or that people were not aware of these options. Our extension solves those problems to some level as well.
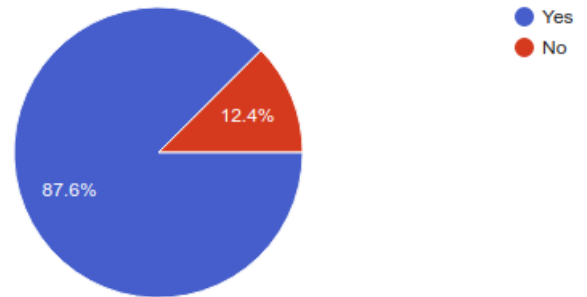
Do you think you would buy more eco-friendly products if given a simple google chrome extension suggesting eco-friendly alternatives of the product you are looking for? (162 responses)

87.6% people have said that if provided with an easily accessible chrome extension, then they will be encouraged to live more sustainably. This shows that people will use the product.