

New York University

Software Engineering Project Proposal

Project: The Givers

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CS4513 Software Engineering

Spring 2020

Professor Strauss

13 February 2020

Motivation

As today's government decreases funding for social services, it is more important than ever to make donating to charities as easy as possible. Though, the process of finding reputable charities, donating to them on a consistent basis, and remaining in contact with them varies tremendously between a given set of charities. There are sites that rank and guide people as to how to support charities such as charitywatch.org and charitynavigator.org, but these sites lack a fun way of incentivising the community to donate and giving local charities more exposure (CharityWatch; Charity Navigator). Furthermore, picking which nonprofit out of the enormous set of options is difficult. The Givers hopes to become the go-to platform to help people decide what nonprofit to support based on their own passions and for nonprofits to reach their financial goals through an online community.

The Givers, our platform, aims at becoming a stage for any non-profit organization or charity to convey their message; on the other hand, it will allow users to browse through a wide collection of causes and donate to the ones they resonate with. A newly-founded charity might find it challenging to get their message across to a large audience all by itself due to the high advertising costs. The Givers will build a bridge between such lesser-known charities and their prospective donors: the charities will be able to advocate for their causes on the platform and build up their presence, while users will be able to browse through the collection of charities and donate to the causes they resonate with.

Proposal

Target Groups

The project is targeted toward non-profit organizations, charities and social advocacy organizations. There is a wealth of non-profit organizations and charities in the society, spanning across all fields such as education, healthcare and environmental protection. There are household names that have built a large presence in all corners of the world, such as the World Wildlife Fund and UNICEF (Isdell & Roberts; UNICEF). That said, there are many other smaller organizations whose messages have not been heard by the vast majority. Even though they are lesser-known, the causes they commit to are just as important as the bigger names. A platform that allows all organizations to advocate their causes and take donations from people from all corners of the world would be tremendously powerful in solving this problem.

System Functionality

The platform will integrate features that streamline the procedures of donation as much as possible.

- There will be a single platform where only one account is needed to donate to several different charities rather than going to multiple charity sites.
- Each charity is ranked based on user preferences, with emphasis on location (local charities are weighed higher).
- The user also has the ability to categorize and view multiple charities by type and motivation (e.g. animal rights and education advocacy).

- Bonuses will be given to charities for reaching certain goals such as money raised or social impact. This would encourage more charities to join the platform as well as more donations.

Constraints

Funding

Funding will be a major constraint in setting up the platform because the system is nonprofit. An assumption should be made that the platform will receive funding from major sponsors. Ideally such funding would be sufficient enough to cover the everyday expenses of the platform. On the other hand, even if funding from sponsors is not sufficient, once the platform has established a substantial presence, it can earn a sustainable amount of revenue from the charities hosted. A small service fee will be assessed in proportion to each charity's total revenue, which will be devoted to the maintenance of the platform and for giving bonuses to charities. The platform will aim at keeping the charges as low as possible, since it is a non-profit organization. With a sizable number of charities, only a small amount from each charity is needed to make the platform sustainable.

Marketing

Another constraint would be the issue of marketing our platform to charities and businesses. Convincing nonprofits to use a new centralized platform for a fee could be a hurdle. Without an existing community, The Givers platform needs to create strategic partnerships. The

assumption would be that many charities have agreed to be on the platform already for the purpose of this project.

Deliverables

Project Proposal: February 13

Software Business Specification (RAS): March 3

Software Requirement and Analysis Specification (RAS): March 10

Software Project Management Plan (SPMP): April 7

Software Analysis Specification – Final (SRS): April 21

Project Presentation: April 28

Software Design Document (SDD): April 30

Citations

Charity Navigator. “Your Guide To Intelligent Giving: Home.” Charity Navigator, Charity Navigator, www.charitynavigator.org/.

CharityWatch. “Charity Ratings: America's Most Independent, Assertive Charity Watchdog.” *CharityWatch*, CharityWatch, www.charitywatch.org.

Isdell, Neville, and Carter Roberts. “2018 Annual Report.” *World Wildlife Fund*, World Wildlife Fund, www.worldwildlife.org/pages/2018-annual-report.

UNICEF. “UNICEF Annual Report 2018.” *UNICEF*, UNICEF, June 2019, www.unicef.org/reports/annual-report-2018.