Austin Auger

Aleksandr Fritz

Matthew Osborne

Brett Seeberger

Michael Tillett

**Project Title:** Voluntr (working title)

**Project Summary:** The group will create a site with the purpose of connecting volunteers with organizations and events that require their help. Focus will be placed on providing metrics and tools to help organizations and individuals easily discover opportunities and individuals who will meet their needs and preferences. Additionally, gamification features will be implemented to encourage users to volunteer more often and stay engaged with the site.

**Project Goals:** The creation of a link between volunteers and organizations that allows organizations to individually identify volunteers with specific skills, an avenue otherwise untapped, and for volunteers to have a seamless way of finding charities and organizations they would be interested in and otherwise may not have found. The individuals in the group will become competent in the use of Ruby on Rails, database design, and basic web design. Emphasis will be placed on learning how to provide a well rounded and easy to use interface that implements Human Computer Interaction design principles.

**Product Features:**

* **Volunteering user profile pages** that provide a useful summary of information provided by the user (particular skills, location, interests, availability/schedule), the evaluations they have received from users they have done volunteer work for or worked alongside. User facing location and contact information will be limited or shown on an opt-in basis to assist in protecting user privacy.
* **Requesting user profile pages** that provide a summary of information on users providing volunteer opportunities. Information may include what is provided by the user, evaluations they have received from volunteering users that have volunteered for them, and a list of recent events organized by them with links to the event page for each.
* **Request post pages** that provide a summary of information on volunteering opportunities. Information may include timeframe, location, the type of volunteering opportunity, skills needed, a list of volunteering users who have indicated interest in participating, a link to a form which allows volunteering users to indicate their interest in participating, and a feed of updates and announcements provided by the requesting user who created the volunteer opportunity pages.
* **A notification feature** that alerts volunteering users when updates or announcements have been added to volunteer opportunity pages to which they have shown interest or made a commitment.
* **Search capabilities** for both volunteering users and requesting users to enable both sets of users to discover volunteer opportunities and potential volunteers. Volunteering users will be able to search volunteer opportunity pages by location, skills needed, the type of volunteering opportunity, and other relevant information. Requesting users will be able to search volunteers by location, skills, availability, and other relevant information. Volunteering users will be allowed to opt-out of being included in this search to assist with protecting user privacy.
* **Scorecards** will allow requesting users to evaluate the performance of volunteering users after each opportunity. Requesting users will be able to indicate whether volunteering users participated in the opportunity in whatever fashion they committed to and will be able to grade them on a one to five scale for metrics such as proficiency in the skills they indicated on their profile and attitude. Volunteering users will be able to evaluate the volunteering opportunity on metrics such as how well the volunteering opportunity was organized and led, how well they were treated, and how committed the organization is to achieving its goal(s).
* **Gamification features** will be included to drive user engagement with the site and reward positive behavior. Points will be rewarded to volunteering users based on participation in volunteering opportunities and positive evaluations from requesting users. A potential stretch goal includes profile badges as a reward for reaching certain milestones such as attending multiple volunteering opportunities, referring new volunteering users to the site, and receiving multiple positive evaluations. Another potential stretch goal is allowing volunteering users to form groups with an aggregate score and leaderboards ranking users and groups by score to introduce competition as a driver of user engagement with volunteering opportunities.

**Any Limitations:**

* **Social media features** will not be added to the site. Many socially-oriented sites start with a specific goal in mind (in this case, facilitating volunteer work), but end up suffering from feature creep as a result of increasing reliance on the platform. To avoid this issue, no ‘social’ features apart from profiles, groups, reviews, will be added.
* **Payment tools** will also not be included, as this volunteering site will focus on the physical involvement of users in volunteer opportunities. There already exist many platforms (Indiegogo, kickstarter, gofundme, etc) which focus on crowdfunding. Moreover, by not including this feature, the legal issues surrounding paid volunteer work will be avoided.
* **Mobile specific features and design elements** will not be included as a core goal of the project, but will be considered as a stretch goal in the case that all essential elements of the project are completed prior to the end of the project.
* **Integrating the communication capabilities of other sites**, such as allowing users to share links to volunteering opportunities on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, will be limited to stretch goals to be included if all core functionality is developed before the deadline for the project.
* **Advanced security features** such as two-factor authentication will be considered outside the scope of this project and attempts will be made to limit the amount of private information on the site so that these features will not be necessary.