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Interview Synthesis Report

The Geosquad began our journey in following various milestones to create a mobile application. We first began with identifying a real-life problem and observed that there is an unmet need for a real-time user-updated reported maps for warzones, such as the Gaza Strip, so residents can interact with a map that includes markers for various zones signified by safety and unsafety zones, and medical stations. Furthermore, we identified specific archetypical users that our mobile application will cater to. Next, we continued our research by assessing competitive mobile applications in the market to analyze features users gave positive and negative feedback on. By analyzing three mobile applications and how it compares to the application we want to make, we identified key components that makes our application different and unique in the market such as creating a specific user permission feature that will allow capabilities such as who will be allowed to mark the map and what will be located on the map. To gain insight into a first-person perspective in Gaza about their wants, needs, and situations, we interviewed 3 residents that are our stakeholders.

Our 3 stakeholders are residents in Gaza and during their interview we got to know them individually. We interviewed Rabab, a 46-year-old adult living in Khan Younis, Gaza, Motasem, a 20-year-old young adult living in the northern Gaze Strip, and Yara, a 16-year-old living in Rafah, Gaza. Upon interviewing them, we gained insider access to their daily lives and perspectives of their user stories for our mobile application. Although we will never be able to

fully comprehend their experiences, through the interview, we were met with utter distress and distraught of lives being turned upside down and the feeling of helplessness. The emotions shown through their responses touched all our hearts and raised our passion to create an application catered to tour users' needs, want, and attention based on our continuous progress through our understanding and capabilities as computer scientist.

Across all stakeholders we were able to identify a great challenge with our app dealing with internet connectivity for our intended users. With Yara's interview, she suggested "an app that does not use internet." Although that would be a remarkable progression in computer science, we know this is likely never going to be possible. Furthermore, Motasem mentioned struggling with internet connectivity. Yara emphasized that the overall size of the app should be small enough to be downloaded by people with unreliable internet access. If the app size is too large, then no one would be able to use the app to even benefit from it. Another issue that was brought to light with our interview with Yara is that all the people in Gaza have a fear of sharing their location or even staying on a phone line for more than a brief "Hello. Are you alive? Okay, goodbye." The Key take away from the information provided by our interviewees is that this app could be potentially useful, but the real-world challenge is that there is intermittent electricity and unreliable internet access. This unfortunately causes a huge issue with our design, which is useful in theory but a useless implementation in terms of the current state of Gaza. What that implies is that though our design can be particularly useful, the desired audience will not be able to benefit from this app the way that we want and can even introduce further challenges to the Gazan population as security seems to be the number one priority for individuals and their families. Unfortunately, we will have to think about catering to a different

audience. The user audience we may shift focus to is one that is not faced with an extreme lack of resources like Gazans. We could begin trying to shift the scope towards Palestinians in the Westbank who face the brutality of the Israeli occupation but have much more reliable resources in terms of internet connectivity.

As we analyzed our interviewees and realized that our app may not be suitable for Gazans, their perspective gave us a better understanding of what our prospective users will want for an app that suits their needs and situations. For example, we would need to change the way we create our mobile application features, such as how we want users to mark safe zones and aid areas. Previously, our plan was that our app would include features that will allow users to mark their safe areas and areas that have medical aid stations based on location. But during the interview, there were alarming number of concerns about sharing locations if there is not security in place for residents so that they are not tracked by their oppressors. Furthermore, we wanted to give our users the ability to feel connected and up to date as events and situations occur, and the ability to communicate with each other better beyond WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to share updates within their community. However, there were some conflicting takeaways in which Motasem and Rabab prefer to receive reports from news reports and official, but Motasem emphasizes, “However, I also recognize that these sources are not always neutral or accurate.” On the other hand, Yara would prefer to hear reports from her close friends and family. Our mobile application would want to include a newsfeed that will allow the residents to receive official news and reports but also an area where relatives can stay connected in a discussion-formatted resource. Yara said, “We had some relatives in Gaza so we were always checking the news so we could check on our family.

Because there was not a way to contact them directly if we had internet, they do not, and if they have internet, we do. So, the news was the only way to check on them, for example, when they were posting names of the martyred, I would look through the list name by name so I can see if my friends are there or not because it was the only way." To accommodate all the residents' fears and desires, we would combine these factors to instead use a button and/or marker for users to state "I am safe" versus marking locations on a map that is a safety zone. Privacy and safety are important to the residents of Gaza because their movements and actions are watched closely, including on social media platforms. Unfortunately, Yara mentioned there are no safety zones and instead, her method of traveling is to keep away from sounds of sirens and bombs and Rabab emphasizes the challenge they face traveling because it is all walking, no other mode of transportation. Nevertheless, we believe in catering to our users' needs so that our mobile application is a useful tool, not a source of obstruction and instability.

In conclusion, the Geosquad feels more well-informed and understands the direction of where our mobile application must head towards. Internet connectivity aside, our mobile application will still include a user permission control panel to only allow certain groups of people accessed into the application. This feature will allow an extra safety precaution to ensure that residents can include specific passwords and codes to gain more access to the map, news and reports, and community discussion feature. Furthermore, the ability for users to anonymize their name yet have a marker to show they are verified once they are approved to use the application can bring a sense of privacy and safety. The application will allow users to mark "I am safe" while a stagnant map that shows areas where water, medical aid, and other essential services will prove useful for residents to go to and from one area to the next, even

offline, to follow can bring some reassurance since the trek is arduous. Lastly, the residents prefer to stay in touch with their community because it is all they have communication with within the areas.

Note: Attached to this report pdf is also the raw-translated interviews from Arabic to English