**The Personal Face of Science**

**Vision**

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, following social distancing standards have become crucial to how effectively we can control the spread of the virus and minimize its negative impact on people’s well-being. While people are encouraged to limit face-to-face interaction, we find it also important that people feel empowered in what they can do to combat the pandemic and take charge of their own actions according to the knowledge they have.

**Problem**

However, two problems that exist are the prevalent misinformation and people’s lack of understanding on how various behaviors can lead to different development patterns of COVID-19. As most people access information about COVID-19 through social media, TV news and digital journals, it is also a fact that a lot of the information being circulated is false and misleading. Even information from authorities is sometimes inconsistent. For example, the claims regarding whether it is necessary to wear masks in public.

In order to empower people to make better decisions, in their personal contexts, about what they can do during the pandemic, we are building an online educational website to tackle these two problems.

**Solution**

Firstly, we want to make sure people have access to the right information by presenting them with a data visualization of how various personal behaviors can affect the ways the pandemic develops. Having people play with the data visualization game, we are making the mathematical science behind COVID-19’s spreading pattern accessible to people without science background, helping them clearly understand the scientific facts and predictions in an intuitive way, therefore they can make informed decisions that guide their behaviors. Another function our website features is that we share a series of personal stories of what actions other people have taken to help relieve the pandemic so people can relate their personal situations to these stories and be inspired on what they can do themselves at this moment. In addition, our users can also post their own stories on the website and motivate each other who share a similar context.

**Sustainability (How we are different)**

The online educational website we build functions as a decision-making engine for people to make empowered and informed decisions. Even after the pandemic, the data visualization models and contents on our website can be adjusted to reach different types of target users in various decision-making contexts. For example, how driving less and biking more can help reduce the carbon emission and what actions people have taken to protect the environment. Designed this way, our website has a broad range of potential use and it is a sustainable project that can constantly deliver values in the long-term.

**Value**

With this online educational website, we aim to achieve below benefits:

* Have the complicated science behind how COVID-19 spreads accessible to non-science people.
* Empower people with the right information and inspire people to better decide what actions they can take in their own contexts.
* Influence people’s decision-making process and guide their behaviors to follow social distancing norms.
* Assist the decision-making process of various users in different scenarios with the adjustable visualization models and contents.
* An interesting tool to play with and have some fun in the learning process.

**Marketing Plan**

In reaching out to the market, we plan to introduce our website by launching social media campaigns on popular platforms like Facebook and Twitter, where users are presented with the link to our website and can share this content to other users in their social media network by inviting more people to join the campaign.

Another way of marketing our product is to collaborate with educational institutions, corporations and residential communities where they can send out emails containing the web links and introduction of our website to their students, employees, and community residents as an effort to improve people’s awareness of how COVID-19’s spreading pattern can vary in accordance to the different actions they take.

**Tentative Plan**

Below are a few designs we would consider to build in the next phase:

* Design the product into a game that is more interactive and fun for users to play with
* Build applications for mobile and tablets so users can access via multiple platforms
* Make the visualization models and contents on our platforms adjustable to assist people in their decision-making processes in different scenarios.

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated