

Find My Food: Hack for Humanity 2020 Markkula Ethical Analysis

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By providing this service, organizations that host events with food have a sustainable way to deal with excess food. Typically, surplus food is just wasted by being thrown out. Giving organizations the ability to announce that they have extra food not only benefits the environment by reducing waste, but also provides a source of food for underprivileged communities. Individuals/families in these communities would sign up to receive notifications on their phones whenever an organization has food available. Non-profit organizations focused on helping low-income families could also be alerted when events have extra food, and distribute the food more efficiently. Additionally, if all the food has not been consumed after a certain amount of time, composting services can be notified through the website to pick up the remaining food.

There are some ethical issues that could arise as a result of this project, one being people who are not underprivileged taking advantage of this service. Someone may sign up to receive alerts about free food, despite being well-off, which is unfair for families/individuals whose lives may depend on this service. This could be prevented by requiring someone signing up to provide proof that they are eligible for the service, however they may not be comfortable with sharing that information. Furthermore, there is the risk of endangering these families'/individuals' healths, as the people in charge of the event may not know if the food is still safe to consume. This could lead to many people getting sick, a bad situation for everyone involved.

Some benefits that come with this project include providing a food source for low-income families/individuals, who may struggle with having enough money for basic necessities. In addition, this would help reduce food waste. It can also allow non-profits who want to help these people connect with these families/individuals, maybe even helping them with other aspects of their lives they might need assistance with. On the other hand, there are some potential harms that could come with this project. The organizations may not be aware that their extra food is no longer safe to eat, raising several legal issues. The customers could get sick as a result of the food, which would not only be bad for the individuals but also for the organization. There could also be miscommunication: a person might be on their way to pick up the food but the organization may have already ran out, wasting that person's time.

One potential harm we identified is the organizations with the extra food not being aware that the food they are providing has gone bad. To minimize those harms, a feature can be added that gives the organization a questionnaire with questions to help evaluate whether the food is still safe to eat. It would ask questions such as what type of food is available and how long it has been out. Another potential harm would be a single event attracting too many people to one area. This could cause danger to the neighboring establishments, making the problem worse. In order to prevent this from happening, the food notification could initially be sent to a small radius around the event, and then after a certain amount of time, the notification is expanded to a larger radius. Finally, the event could potentially run out of food faster than anticipated,

possibly angering the customers of the service. To mitigate this, the website could require the organization to update food availability every thirty minutes.