Just Up the Street

A model for community based change.

# Summary

The idea is to create a forum for local to global communities to pool their resource to provide financial incentives to solve problems. This is done by allowing Individuals to create prizes with clearly defined requirements and financial rewards for whomever can fulfill the prize’s requirements. Once a prize is created, others in the community can contribute to the prize pool thereby increasing the financial incentive to win the prize.

# Key Goals

The primary aim of the Project is to create a community-based prize creation and distribution system. This will be accomplished by:

* Provide a structure for predicable payouts to prize winners
* Protect contributors funds from fraudulent payouts
* Protect individual prize funds from disputes over other prize payouts
* Provide a framework for resolving prize disputes

## Predicable Payouts

The main reason for this goal is to allow people considering solving a problem to create ROI models to determine if the prize pool amount justifies the investment it will take to win the prize.

## Prevent Gaming

One danger with a system like this is that someone will determine a way to collect prizes without accomplishing the prizes’ intent. We will need to build in mechanisms to prevent people “stealing” prize money while not reducing actual problem solvers confidence in their ability to collect rightfully-earned prize money.

## Prize Fund Isolation

In the event the funds for one prize are locked up in a dispute, we need to ensure that this doesn’t impact the service’s ability to continue paying out for other prizes.

## Dispute Resolution

Clearly, if this service is used, someone will dispute that all the requirements for a prize have been correctly fulfilled. In these cases, it will be important that the system has a clearly defined, transparent and fair resolution process.

# Project Challenges

It is clear that there will be many challenges inherent with this project and that most of them are outside the realm of software engineering.

* Protect the web site operators from litigation.
* Develop a fair method for determining if someone has won a prize.
* Ensure that prizes have positive goals.
* Ensure that prize rules/requirements are clear, unambiguous, and compelling.
* …

# Scenarios

This section describes some key scenarios

## Scenarios 1

Frank’s neighborhood has a problem: all of the runoff from the neighborhood’s driveways goes straight into a local stream that has a sensitive ecology. Frank wants this problem solved so he goes to [www.JustUpTheSteet.com](http://www.JustUpTheSteet.com) and creates a new prize for whoever can solve it. He knows there are some simple but impractical solutions, like “no one is allowed to drive into his neighborhood,” so he carefully fills out the requirements for winning the prize. Frank’s requirements look something like this:

1. Protect Carkeek stream from oil runoff from 5th AVE NW and NW 110th St Seattle WA
2. Cannot impinge on homeowner’s access, by vehicle or other means, to their property.
3. Cost less than $200 to implement
4. Protection must be designed to last for a minimum of 2 years

Next Frank seeds the prize with $25 using his debit card and sets an expiration date for that prize money. If the prize is not claimed by the expiration date, the money will be returned to Franks. Finally, Frank sends notifications to his neighbors about the newly created prize.

Sally, one of Frank’s neighbors, sees the notifications and decides to check it out. Sally likes the goal of the prize and she decides to contribute $50 to the prize pool with an expiration date further out than Franks.

Jim also sees the notification and decides to contribute $10 to the prize pool.

Several weeks later, Jeff is browsing the prizes on [www.JustUpTheStreet.com](http://www.JustUpTheStreet.com) and he comes across Frank’s prize and several others that address the same problem but in different places. After looking at the payout schedules, Jeff determines that if he can solve all of these similar problems within the next 10 weeks, he will be guaranteed to get at least $535. If the solution takes between 10 and 14 weeks to deliver, he will be guaranteed to get at least $455. With this information, Jeff decides to invest time and resources into developing a solution for these problems.

Once Jeff has his solution, he submits it to collect each of the prizes. At that point the prize pools contributors for each prize determine if the requirements for the prizes they contributed to have been fulfilled. For each prize approved by its contributors, the prize money is distributed by [www.JustUpTheStreet.com](http://www.JustUpTheStreet.com) to Jeff. For any prizes that are in contention, the dispute mediation mechanize is activated.

# Required Skill Sets

This section lists skill sets that we will need for the project to be successful.

* Lawyer – EUL, general site protection
* PR – Handle evangelize site and mitigate any ‘unpleasant’ prizes
* Web designer
* Service coder
* …

# Thoughts on…

This section is for anything thoughts you maybe have on how to make this project successful.

## cdockter

Here are some of the ideas I have bouncing around I my head on how certain parts of this could work but don’t really have great answers for.

### Determining a Winner

To determine if someone has fulfilled the requirement of a prize and should therefore receive the prize money, I’ve been thinking it take a certain percentage contributors to the prize (like 35% of all users that contributed) and a certain percentage of the total prize pool (like 60% of dollar amount must approve). Maybe we will have some minority dispute option as well to allow small contributors to red-flag prize awards they think are ill-gotten.

### Resolving Disputes

Disputed prizes would go to some kind of mediator counsel where “trusted” members of the community would read over the prize requirements, the claimant’s application, and comments from both sizes.

### Holding Prize Pool Money

I think the system will need to hold onto cash that has been pledged for prizes to guarantee that the funds are available if a winner is determined for a prize. This money will be paid back to the contributors if the prize expires or paid out to the winner in the case the prize is won, but what happens with the cash well it is being held? Will the cash be gaining interest, and if so, what happens to that interest on payout? Does it feed into the prize, does it go back to the contributors, is it used as operating budget for the service?

## zzilkova

Thoughts contributed by Zuzka

### Prize RFC period

The prize rules may benefit from that “Request for Comment” period during which the community can help refine a prize’s rules/requirements.

### End User Agreement

The site will need some type of agreement allowing the operations to remove prized that do not align with the sites goals/ethics.

### Small Fee to Contribute

The goal is for contributes to have some meat in the game so they don’t just want their contribution returned to them.