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EECS 395 Technology and Human Interaction

Homework 2: Preliminary Project Ideas

Potential App Name: inTouch

Description:

inTouch is an application that would help remind users to keep in touch with friends and family. Often when people are busy they can find themselves going lengths of time without maintaining contact with people that are important in their lives or would be beneficial to keep in contact with. inTouch would allow users to design template messages for initial contact. The application would be a notification based application that minimizes required visits to the application. When the user initializes the app for the first time they are prompted to select from their contact list people they want to keep in contact with. They can rank people either by priority which will leave the frequency of notifications up to the applications decision or they can specify how often they want to keep in touch with the user and receive notifications to contact people that way.

Through some research I found that there are a few apps that aim to make it easier for people to remain connected to people close to them. There is an application called Bond that focusses on allowing users to link their messaging, phone history, and social media interaction with different people. Using this mapping the application keeps track of how frequently the user is keeping in contact with specific people and it can generate reminders based on the user’s settings. The notifications will remind you to email, call, or text specific individuals. Another application called Contacts+ aggregates all your contacts across phone, email, and social media and ranks them based on order of how frequently certain people are contacted.

The applications mentioned earlier are very similar in the focus of reminding users to keep in contact with one another and also allowing room for ranking people for contact based on importance however, inTouch addresses an aspect that appeared missing in these applications, methods to increase the likelihood that a user will be able to make that initial contact when they receive a notification. inTouch would have functionality that could wait to push notifications when users are generally free or on a break. These are settings a user can add to the application by listed general times in the day they are free. Increasing the chances that they will be able to actually make that call or text to someone of importance at the point that they get the reminder notification. In addition, inTouch would allow users to make messages ahead of time and store them in the application. When a notification to text/call a person is pushed a busy user can go ahead and push a prewritten message to the the contact. Preventing any missed initial outreach to contact due to the users being too busy in the moment to respond.

Often part of what makes it difficult to keep in touch with people is putting them in the backburner or forgetting to respond when there is a lot of activities or responsibilities in one’s life. The application would address these problems by allowing users to select people they want to keep in contact with and with what frequency and then pushing notifications to maintain contact.

The potential users of this application are all people who have an iPad and use it to store contact information. These users would need to be people who generally use their iPad daily and will be available to see notifications.

Potential App 2 Name: VeriPol

Description: VeriPol would allow users to search up and quickly retrieve information on bills and policies that politicians running for office have supported and not supported. A user would open the application and then select what type of elections they want to view and be provided with a list of candidates and incumbents for that office. Or the user can search for a specific politician by name. Following the selection of a candidate they are then provided with a listing of common bills and policies that they have or haven’t supported.

PollTracker allows users to keep track of polls of political candidates. Countable allows users to view current bills that politicians are voting on and view quick view versions of the writing and terms of the bill in progress. Politifact allows users to keep track of the validity of statements made by politicians.

The aspect that sets VeriPol apart from the applications aforementioned is the fact that it will allow users to keep track of previous bills and issues that politicians have supported. Bills in the present, like Countable keeps track of, are important too however, bills of the past affect people. Knowing how politicians voted in the past will speak a lot louder than the what they propose in the present. It will give users some more information and a look into the character and record of politicians and help guide voting decisions accordingly.

Potential users of this application are iPad owners that are politically active. This app could also be used by those that are interested in politics at times that are critical for them. For example, during presidential election season this application may be used by people who are keeping track of running politicians. These same users may not be as interested in keep track of legislation or local offices.