Group members: Andrew Lai.

Proposal / Problem / Application Idea / Overall Goal

// the proposal is below this segment. skip it if you're tired of reading lol

I've always found these formal proposals to be a bit disingenuous. Ideally, shit like this should be about dealing with something real, right? And true, it's important to get across whether or not an idea is actually something that can be viably implemented, or little more than a stray impulse; investors need something real - something grounded in reality - to feel confident about. As someone who's listened in on quarterly earnings reports, anxiously awaiting the results of the conference while staring at a screen of options and derivatives, it's the most important thing in the world, really.

But at the end of the day, this sort of shit removes the human part of figuring out what problems to solve - it abstracts what should be real into numbers and spreadsheets, into profit margins and business analytics. Sure, that shit creates jobs. Sure, that shit keeps the world running. But it means a lot of the "problems" being "solved" are problems that wouldn't exist without other people having created them on purpose; they're problems that don't really exist, with solutions that are meaningless at their core.

It's all about approach, isn't it? There are ways to approach situations, ways to approach problems that don't create additional problems that need to be dealt with. But these approaches don't create value, these approaches don't drive profit. It's ridiculous, really, that some of the companies I've interned at derive most of their cash flow from making things more difficult for their customers; they make their solutions difficult to work with, on purpose, to force customers to come back to them for help.

A lot of applications, nowadays, are based on making things "easier" for people - but all they do is create additional problems. Streaming services, IoT, social media, payment methods, search engines, ad blockers - the basic idea behind any of these is simple. But the amount of splintering they've gone through over the years in the search for short-term profit has resulted in a sort of existence wherein it feels like I'm being torn in 50 different directions, my line of sight oversaturated with pristine social feeds, meaningless gadgets, vacuous advertising, pleas to disable my adblocker - all while the people that make these things and do this shit pretend to be passionate about what they do. "I'm so excited to announce my new pursuit," they say, "and I'm so excited to share what I'm working on with you all!"

The field that CS majors are pouring into right now is going to come crashing down, sooner or later; people are being paid far too much to do too little, being given far too much for solving problems that don't inherently exist. I used to be a lot more passionate about this stuff. But it's getting harder and harder to care about these problems - to stay motivated about doing something real - when everything I see nowadays doesn't fucking matter.

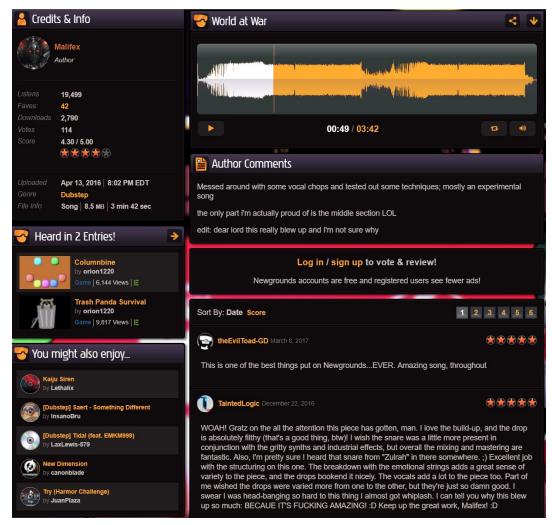
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// PROPOSAL //

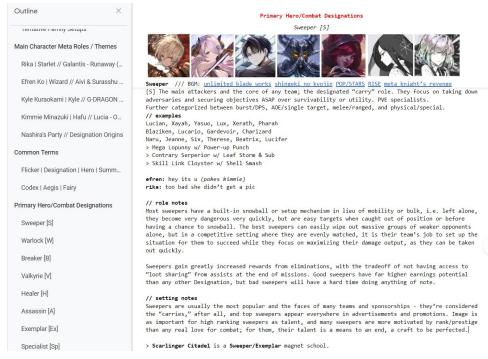
For context, here's some shit I've made:



Art post of an original character with 2.6k likes on Instagram.



Original song with 19k listens and 2.8k downloads.



A snippet of what I've been working on with a small group of people.

// Run

"The two arms tied up by daily life are too heavy to embrace dreams. No matter how much I run, I'm still in the same spot."

// Home is Far Away

"I have a long way to go, but no ride to take me there—could you, for a moment, stop and give me a lift?"

"The world lends a calculated hand; I don't want to reach for it, but I'm more afraid of being left empty-handed."

// Lovedrunk

"I'm trying so hard to erase you, like a fool; maybe in erasing you, I'll end up erasing myself. I know I shouldn't, but I'm trying to."

"T've always had insomnia. Sometimes that insomnia was brought on by the fact that I was very driven by a dream. I wouldn't allow myself to sleep early because time was so precious and I didn't want to waste it sleeping. That was a good reason to be sleepless. At the same time, there were many times when I was sleepless because reality had become like a nightmare. I couldn't sleep. If you look at somebody and you want to check that they're alive, you zoom in on the fact that they're breathing, right? Most of the time you don't notice that someone is breathing until they're not. To observe someone's sleeplessness allows you to see why they're breathing. And what is either driving them or what is making them suffer from nightmares. I think sleeplessness shows so much about a person. As much as dreams or love or other emotions. Much more than those emotions."

From a post on my Medium titled "Real."

// the actual proposal

I'm honestly tired of working with CS related shit, and I don't really know if I want to be a developer or software engineer, anymore. But I may as well use some of the skills I've picked up over time, right? I'm sorry if the work I've turned in has been kind of mediocre. It's my last quarter here, and I'm having a harder time staying motivated about it than I used to.

I've spent a lot of my free time working on a little story I'd like to tell; I've learned how to make art, how to produce music, how to write characters and dialogue, how to tell a story that matters - all in the interest of hopefully making some people feel like they aren't alone in this shitty ass existence.

I've used **Google Docs** to hold a lot of it together, but it's starting to show its limits - little things like being unable to collapse certain sections (**VSCode style**), being unable to link to other parts of the doc (it's 190 pages of concepts and ideas, right now), being unable to add alt text and hovers, being unable to embed things easily - at this point, the work is complete enough that I need a little more flexibility to continue building the world the way I'd like to.

Additionally, because this is also serving as the basis for a game in development, I need a way to embed stats and important engine-related information without it cluttering up the page itself; as Google Docs is inherently a document application, there isn't a way to do this, there. It'd be nice to have a text-online command line way to access the information of each character; I've done a little bit of testing with this, but it's not

So, my proposal is an app for developing a visually oriented series, combining expertise in writing/art/design/music/development - being able to link characters and locations together, being able to embed pictures with hover text, adding music and ambient noise to certain entries, being able to traverse using a command-line based tool - designed for people that require more features that what stuff like Google Docs allows. Think what Jupyter Notebook is for data scientists, except for people like my little artist/developer circle.

I'll have a full list of features later. But hopefully what I've included in the "context" part tells you that I'm not just bullshitting, here - I'll do my part to fulfill the requirements of the class project, but this is really more for me. So the interface will likely be something that works best for me, rather than works best for most people, even if it does follow some of the guidelines from the class.

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Just let me know if something like this isn't okay, and I'll come up with some bullshit idea that'll look like what you probably want, or what most people will turn in. But I think this adequately fits the "real-world" application part of the project, doesn't it?