Final Project Part 1 Questions

Name of Your Projects

A Children’s CrowdStory

Give a one-sentence description of your project.

The goal of “A Children’s CrowdStory” is to write a full children’s book with illustrations using crowd workers.

What problem does it solve?

While it doesn’t tackle any major societal problems, this project is aimed to make a great storybook and figure out the elements that go into a good children’s book. It also examines how people build off other’s ideas to create their own story.

What similar projects exist?

Scott Klososky created a book using crowdsourcing, on the power of crowdsourcing. The book is titled, “Enterprise Social Technology: Helping Organizations Harness the Power of Social Media, Social Networking, Social Relevance.” The book is co-authored by experts in the field, and every other aspect of the book, such as the cover, was crowdsourced.

What type of project is it?

Creating a book

Who will be the members of your crowd?

Online workers from CrowdFlower and an equivalent interface for designs or illustrations, such as 99Designs, CrowdSpring, or DesignCrowd (among others)

How will you incentivize them to participate?

Offer money for completing tasks.

What will they provide, and what sort of skills do they need?

The initial workers will provide a page-worth of written content, about 2 sentences to a paragraph. After the literature it completed, the designer workers will provide one illustration per one or two pages plus a cover illustration. The text workers will need writing skills, creativity, and a child-like sense of humor. The artists will obviously have to be great designers or drawers and be familiar with the simple, colorful style of children’s books.

How will you ensure the quality of the crowd provides?

After every additional page that is written, we will have a rating task to determine which page fits best for our book. We can have 5 or so categories (such as interesting, relevance to the story, child-appropriate, etc.) rated on a scale from 1 to 10. We will then average those scores along with rating tasks of the same text to have an aggregate rating for each potential additional page. As for the illustrators, if we wanted to keep it purely crowd sourced, we would have to have tasks that rate the illustrations to determine the best. However, I think we would enjoy choosing the best illustrations on our own.

How will you aggregate the results from the crowd?

As mentioned above, the results from one worker’s submission will be on a rating task that adds the submitted text to the pages that have already been accepted by the previous rating task. It is then up to the workers of the rating tasks to determine which submissions make the cut. Hopefully it will make more sense in the next question.

Describe each of the steps involved in your process. What parts will be done by the crowd, and what parts will be done automatically.

First, we would have to come up with a very general topic for a children’s story that can be easily expanded upon. Crowd workers could also do this if we set up a task that asked workers to suggest topics. Then we have ten workers write the first two pages of the story given the topic. Each page will be 2 sentences to 2 short paragraphs. Then we have 30 workers do a rating task (3 for each submission) described above. This will yield the best first two pages. We then have another 10 workers write the third page, and another 30 workers to evaluate their submissions. Note that this second rating task will have the text from the best first two pages plus the text that was just submitted, because they need to be evaluating the whole story. So the 30 second rating tasks will have the same first two pages but 10 different third pages. This process repeats until we have reached the desired limit, in which case we will give the instruction to the workers to conclude the story. The first writing task is the only one that requires two pages worth; getting off to a good start just seems very important. Then we take the finished text and put it on a design/illustration crowdsourcing platform, and specify that we want an illustration for every one or two pages plus a cover and end illustration. As described before, we can either have the crowd decide which set of illustrations to go with through another rating task, or we can decide ourselves. I am leaning towards the latter because I think it would be more enjoyable.

How will you evaluate if your project is successful?

If the story turns out interesting, fun, and child-appropriate, and if the illustrations are creative and valuable to the story, then we would consider it a success.

What potential problems do you foresee when implementing your project?

To start, I’m not too familiar with the full capabilities of CrowdFlower. For example, the people who submit one page are not allowed to rate pages or submit other pages further along in the story. We also need a maximum word count when submitting a page to prevent the text from becoming overwhelming to children. I’m not sure CrowdFlower has a mechanisms to implement these restrictions. Additionally, I haven’t looked too much into these design crowdsourcing platforms. They look like they can be quite costly, and we need one that offers more than just logos. In terms of the story, one of the problems we may have is the story being child-inappropriate. Someone could write something funny, but not necessarily appropriate, and the raters give it a good score because they find it amusing. If a page like this is chosen, we have a problem, and may have to remove it and go with the second best. The story could also just be really bad.