Team Contract

Data Against Police Brutality (DAPB)

Team Members:
Anu Kandasamy, Elena Silva, Ashraf Bade

Designated Roles:

- Elena will schedule meetings using Outlook Calendar and send out when-to-meets when needed for scheduling.
- Ashraf will make a meeting agenda before each meeting
- Anu will create and manage a team Github account where we will share all our code
- A scribe will be appointed every meeting and will rotate through each member
- Anu will submit the team assignments on Canvas.

Communication Methods
We'll use a message group chat for routine business and Zoom meetings for completing work together.
Phone numbers:

- Elena Silva
  847-542-5369
- Anu Kandasamy
  609-721-3220
- Ashraf Bade
  617-682-5086

Coding
We will code our interface in JavaScript and React Native. All team members have sufficient programming expertise in this language so that if the team is forced to split, they will be able to continue the project in that language.

Meeting Logistics
We will meet every Thursday at 5:00-5:15 to go over the week's assignment quickly using Zoom.
We will also meet every Monday at 6:30 to consolidate any individual work we completed over the weekend and work together to complete the assignment.
Team documents will be stored on a shared Google drive.

Desirable Behaviors

- Come to meetings on time.
- Share work fairly.
- Be in class for the interactive exercises that we work on as a team.

- Respond to group messages and emails.
- We will use our late days only if all team members need more time to complete the assignment

Project Proposal

Data Against Police Brutality (DAPB)

Proposal by Ashraf Bade (bade.a@northeastern.edu), Elena Silva (silva.el@northeastern.edu), and Anu Kandasamy (kandasamy.a@northeastern.edu)

Team Page: https://github.com/elenarose/DAPB/blob/main/ProjectProposal.md

Problem

The problem to be addressed is two-fold. The first problem is that calling the police using the standard 911 dial-in service is outdated and in some cases even broken. One of the biggest issues plaguing this service is that with the advent of mobile phones, locating distressed callers has become much more difficult for dispatchers. In times past, the police could rely on a call coming from a particular address, usually the billing address of the phone, but mobile phones have changed this. Therefore, in times of crisis the dispatcher taking the call must hold their nerve, collect their distresee's information, and figure out where to send the first responders. This process is not only inefficient, but it places significant pressure on the call agent. Most importantly, it is dangerously inconsistent.

The other problem that needs to be addressed is in relation to the lack of accountability that police officers have to their citizens. This became especially apparent in the summer of 2020 when the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor went viral and sent the country into mass protests. This brought the police into greater focus regarding how they conduct themselves. The results were appalling as many more cases came to light, and it became evident that the police did not operate at the same standard for all citizens. In fact, to minority groups, people of color, and people in poverty, the police are often seen as being a violent group who brutalize communities, and worse than that they get away with it. Hence, why police accountability is a major problem and is also one of the focuses of this interface.

Solution

Our proposed solution is a mobile application that allows citizens to interact with and "call" the police without necessarily placing an actual phone call. The main functionalities of the app are the ability to call the police, track their location or distance away, view which police officers are actually responding based on name or badge number, and to leave a review of the interaction

with the police afterward. The app would use the phones GPS to provide the service operators with an exact location of the emergency and would also provide more flexibility for the person placing the call. The flexibility would be provided for individuals in situations where an actual phone conversation is either not feasible or could actually put them into greater danger. Once the call is placed, the citizen in distress can actually understand how far away the responders are. Finally, after an interaction takes place, feedback can be submitted by citizens through the same app.

This solves the problems stated above by providing service operators with more detailed information about the callers whereabouts and possibly their name, age, pre-existing medical conditions and more. This information would make the responders better equipped to safely handle any situation they are entering. It also provides a pathway for trust in the police force to be renewed and repaired among parts of the population that have been systematically treated unequally by them. This could be made possible through the feedback that officers, police departments, and municipalities would have access to through the app. We foresee a system that would not only make citizens safer, it would also help police departments to reform, retrain, and rebuild in the areas most needed.

Target Audience

In the long run, the target audience for our mobile application would be residents from Boston & surrounding areas with smartphones and sufficient technical skills to use a mobile application. Specifically, residents who need to contact law enforcement for crimes, emergencies, accidents, etc. For the first few iterations of our application, we will focus on Northeastern students and faculty and their interactions with the Northeastern University Police Department (NUPD). We will ask students and faculty about what specific interactions they have with the NUPD (safety issues on campus, medical emergencies, etc.), and how those interactions could be improved. We will also share our idea with the target audience and ask whether or not they would use it, and make note of any changes they suggest.

We will not narrow down our target audience too much since anyone could experience an emergency and need police or medical assistance. However, it is important to note that our application aims to repair the relationship between law enforcement and those who have been systematically treated unfairly by them. Therefore, we will also ask for user feedback from those minority groups within the students/faculty population specifically.

Relation to the Post-Pandemic World

The pandemic has exposed inequalities among communities of different racial groups and socioeconomic statuses. This is because communities of color have been negatively affected at a higher rate than other groups; they receive a lower quality of healthcare and may be apprehensive about calling law enforcement if they have been racially profiled or discriminated against in the past. The goal of our application is to rebuild the trust between these communities

and the police as it is essential to their health and wellbeing, especially during and after a global pandemic.