

## Stage II - Project Proposal Pitch and Specifications

Due: 2/12/2020

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GitHub repo: <https://github.com/315-6/socialSrHub>

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- **Problem Statement**

The main issue we aim to solve involves the growth of the srhub.org and civicstory.org websites. The main issue we've been able to identify in the srhub.org and civicstory.org websites is the lack of community building. For a site so focused on events happening within communities for a good cause, the site lacks the ability to have people connect with one another and share content on topics that they hold an interest in. Another issue we've identified is a lack of reasons for people to keep returning to these websites.

- **Objective of the module.**

We aim to tackle the issue of community building by adding additional functionality that we believe will enhance the user experience, overall. By creating user pages, and allowing users to interact with other user pages (by allowing a user to set their pages to public, giving anybody the ability to see them or private, allowing only permitted individuals to see their page), we believe that we can allow users to build communities within this domain.

We believe our proposed module will also address the issue of reasons to return to the website by allowing users to see content that may be outside of their immediate realm of interest. By exposing users to new and interesting content, we believe that all users will have a reason to return to the sites often.

- **Description of the desired end product, and the part you will develop for this class.**

Our vision for the module we aim to develop is similar to that of a user's page on common social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter. The end product will function similarly to these sites, allowing users to see content that users they "follow" or prominent figures within their communities are reposting or commenting on. We also would aim to recommend content to users, based on previous things they've looked at, potentially furthering their scope of interaction with the site.

As far as the module we will develop for class goes, our main priorities center around the setup for the user page, allowing users to favorite content they find interesting or useful, and potentially recommending additional content to users. Stretch goals include allowing users to see other user pages, and commenting and reposting posts.

- **Description of the importance and need for the module, and how it addresses the problem.**

We believe that development of the proposed module will ultimately increase traffic to srhub.org and civicstory.org, allowing for rapid growth of these websites. The ability for people to share things that they find important has proven useful for the growth of social media sites over the past few years and we think a similar principal can be applied here.

- **Plan for how you will research the problem domain and obtain the data needed.**

We've already performed some research into the problem domain by browsing other sites with similar goals and looking for features we found particularly useful or features that improved the user experience. In order to obtain the data needed, we will very likely use artificial data modeled after the content available on srhub.org and civicstory.org

- **Other similar systems / approaches that exist, and how your module is different or will add value to the existing system.**

Obviously, popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn were our main inspiration for development of our proposed module. Our module is unique in that it focused on the niche srhub.org and civicstory.org, which aims to provide users with resources and information relating to sustainability in New Jersey. We believe our module will add value to the site by allowing users to form connections through the context of these websites.

- **Possible other applications of the system (how it could be modified and reused.)**

Our system will provide a template for other small sites to implement similar systems. As previously mentioned, the main goal of our system is to allow users to build communities within the site and we think this can be applied to other sites with similar goals.

- **Performance -- specify how and to what extent you will address this.**

We will aim to maximize performance by performing as few queries as we can while accomplishing the functionality proposed. We believe this will be the main source of

performance enhancement within the system. We are also researching alternative ways to maximize performance within this context.

- **Security -- specify how and to what extent you will provide security features.**

While we believe that the nature of the proposed system is relatively secure, we will provide some features that allow for additional security for the user and the system. For users, we will allow them to specify to what extent they want their page to be accessible by other users. For users who want only specified (or no one) to be able to view the content on their page, we will provide an option to make their page private. This function will allow the user to moderate who is able to see the information on their page.

In terms of system security, we will be parsing all user input to ensure that none of the common mistakes that applications like this have will appear in this system. One of the most common problems with systems that utilize a database is SQL injections, and parsing input along with a whitelist of accepted input will largely eliminate this threat.

- **Backup and recovery -- specify how and to what extent you will implement this.**

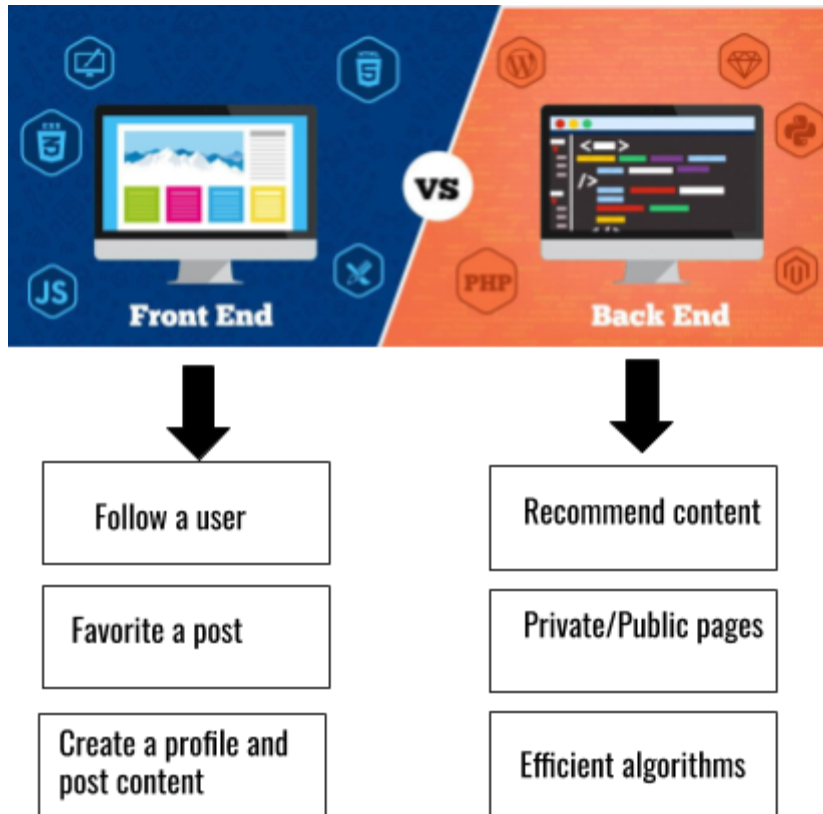
In determining the most efficient way to ensure our system will remain backed up and recoverable is establishing what we need to be backing up. Each user will have a user profile that contains their personal information. This will be our main focus, preserving user data with the database. We will utilize logical backups, a system used in our DBMS. The server will save each user profile in a file within our VM, ensuring that if the original database fails, we have user information protected. We can automate this process within SQL, making backup and recovery a part of our system from very early on. Since we do not anticipate having tons of users data, along with other data, we will be able to store that data within the VM. If the amount of data we use exceeds that, we can switch over to hard disk data that is automatically updated over a set period of time.

- **Technologies and database concepts the team will need to learn, and a plan for learning these.**

The technology and concepts we will need is going to be the hardest task to accomplish. We are going to need to understand back end database development and how to efficiently store this data. This will be done through class along with supplementary work such as a deep dive into SQL and PHP. On the front end, we are going to need to familiarize ourselves with CSS and HTML to keep the user experience clean and easy to understand. In order for users to receive data similar to their favorites and other users they follow, some information retrieval and

algorithms work is going to be used as well. The overall technology we are going to have to understand is how social networks work, front end and back end.

- A diagrammatic representation of the system boundary that specifies what data you will model and which queries you will implement.



## Social Sustainability

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### Objective

Build a community that allows users to connect with each other within the sustainability sector in New Jersey

Provide srhub.org and civicstory.org a way to connect with their users in a more technologically advanced way

Develop an easier way for srhub.org and civicstory.org to identify the leading problems in communities and the general populations opinions on sustainability in New Jersey



Building a Community

### Approach

Create a community around srhub.org and civicstory.org that allows users to interact with each other by:

1. Create a social media platform that allows users to create a profile and interact with other users
2. Recommend content based on user profiles and activity within the platform
3. Allow users to share articles, ideas, opinions, and videos within the platform

### Key Milestones

- Project Specifications 02/24/20
- Database Model 03/09/20
- Overall Design 03/26/20
- Implementation of GUI and DB 04/27/20
- Final System Report 05/04/20