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4 Oct 2022

CART 451

Final project proposal

<center>A home to numbers</center>

"If I look at the mass, I will never act. If I look at the one, I will. " Mother Teresa's words encapsulate a potent and profoundly uncomfortable truth about human nature: most people are kind and will go to tremendous lengths to protect "the one" whose desperate situation comes to their attention. However, these same people frequently lose all empathy for "the one," who is merely one victim of a much bigger issue.

Paul Solvik and a team of Swedish researchers conducted a different study to gauge people's empathy and desire to lend a hand to others in various response scenarios. A number of people were asked about their desire to donate after seeing two pictures: the first included a child who appeared to be impoverished and in need, and the second featured two identical toddlers. Surprisingly, the sole child received the majority of gifts, while the percentage of donations for the other two children fell dramatically. And when a second image was added, showing eight children in need of assistance, both the percentage of aid provided and the participants' positive attitudes toward the kids' suffering fell. One of the most well-known defences for psychological numbness toward mass disasters is that it is a psychological trick used in self-preservation that enables a person's nervous system to process tragic news with restrained reactions and to adapt promptly to it. Slovik, on the other hand, said that it is also self-centred since we believe that any effort we make to help will be in vain and that our support in this situation - if we offer it - will not please us with the same sense of fulfillment that we have after aiding a specific person.

According to a UNICEF report published in March 2021, at least 12,000 children have died or been injured in Syria since 2011. According to this figure, a Syrian child will die every eight hours over the course of ten years as a result of the unfortunate conditions surrounding the Syrian crisis. The World Count, a statistics-focused website, estimates that 3 million children worldwide die from hunger and malnutrition each year, or one child every 10 seconds on average. The World Health Organization also kept track of 41,000 deaths of children under the age of fifteen that were a result of maltreatment by their environment, which was eventually blamed for frequent falls and burns. Yet, no one pays attention to these stories. A quote by Joseph Stalin that summarises the first paragraph states, "If only one man dies of hunger, that is a tragedy. If millions die, that's only statistics. " With that being said, I wanted to put a spotlight on how big the issue of refugees really is. Many people neglect their stories and do not understand how much the issue can be scaled up. When we hear that X number of refugees had to leave their countries, we do not realize that these people, these families, were leaving their houses, their memories, and their lives behind and going to the unknown. If the Unkown welcomed them. This topic is important to me because in 2015 when over 25.000 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada, I was a volunteer in my community and would help the newcomers with their day-to-day tasks and would help them with translation. That made me realize that the numbers we see on the screen are mostly kind people with unfortunate circumstances who did not want to leave their houses, but they were forced to.

So many stories have come out as a statistic on TV. For that, I wanted to visualize how big the number of refugees is and zoom in on more personal stories. Visualizing this number helps people understand the depth of the issue, understand how big the number is, and hopefully,

help with the cause. My target audience is basically everyone. It would be more pushed towards people who think less of immigrants or refugees.

I intend on using the web as a medium. I believe making a website about this topic is my best bet since it is the most accessible to my target audience as well as the best medium to deliver my message. Although, I am intending on using an interactive element and that would be through the website as well! Designing and developing the website will allow me to have the freedom to choose how many pages I would like to have. I am aiming toward having an informative website, so having that freedom is definitely something I will use. The fact that the website can be shared and opened from anywhere in the world is extremely important as well. The website will have some technologies integrated, like an API for the interactive-heat map.

The data that I will be using is mostly collected by the UNHCER Refugee Agency. They have data and statistics over the last 21 years about refugees, their host countries, and their homes. I will also have data from Statista.com. They offer many refugees' data from specific countries like Syria. I will also import some data about public places and how many people they can fit in to make users understand the numbers they see on the screen. For instance, the user will select a hotspot country (a country with a high number of refugees) and that will generate where would these refugees will fit. So, if Syria had 1 million refugees, the website would say these refugees are equivalent to 20 Concordia campuses if every campus had 50,000 students. That way there is a bit of understanding of the number we see.

Three projects that inspired me are Project Syria by MIT, Refugees are, and meet Fadak.

[Project Syria | MIT](#)

Project Syria depends on virtual reality to portray and give an experience of what it is like to be a refugee in the Syrian refugee camps as a child. It gives a completely new perspective on

how some refugees are living and gives an insight into their inhumane living conditions. In their own words, "an immersive journalism piece that conveys the plight of the child refugees in Syria." The project takes the user through a complete story, from the second the rocket hits the streets of the city of Aleppo. The first scene is a recreation of a busy street corner in Syria's Aleppo district. A rocket lands in the middle of the song, scattering dust and debris everywhere. The second scene dissolves to a refugee camp, where the viewer experiences being in the centre of a camp as it grows exponentially, paralleling the real story of how the extraordinary number of Syrian refugees fleeing their homeland have had to seek refuge in camps.

A project like that makes us remember that these people had very unfortunate circumstances that will affect their lives with trauma and other things for the next few years. Yet, they leave and face more racism outside of their home rather than be welcomed.
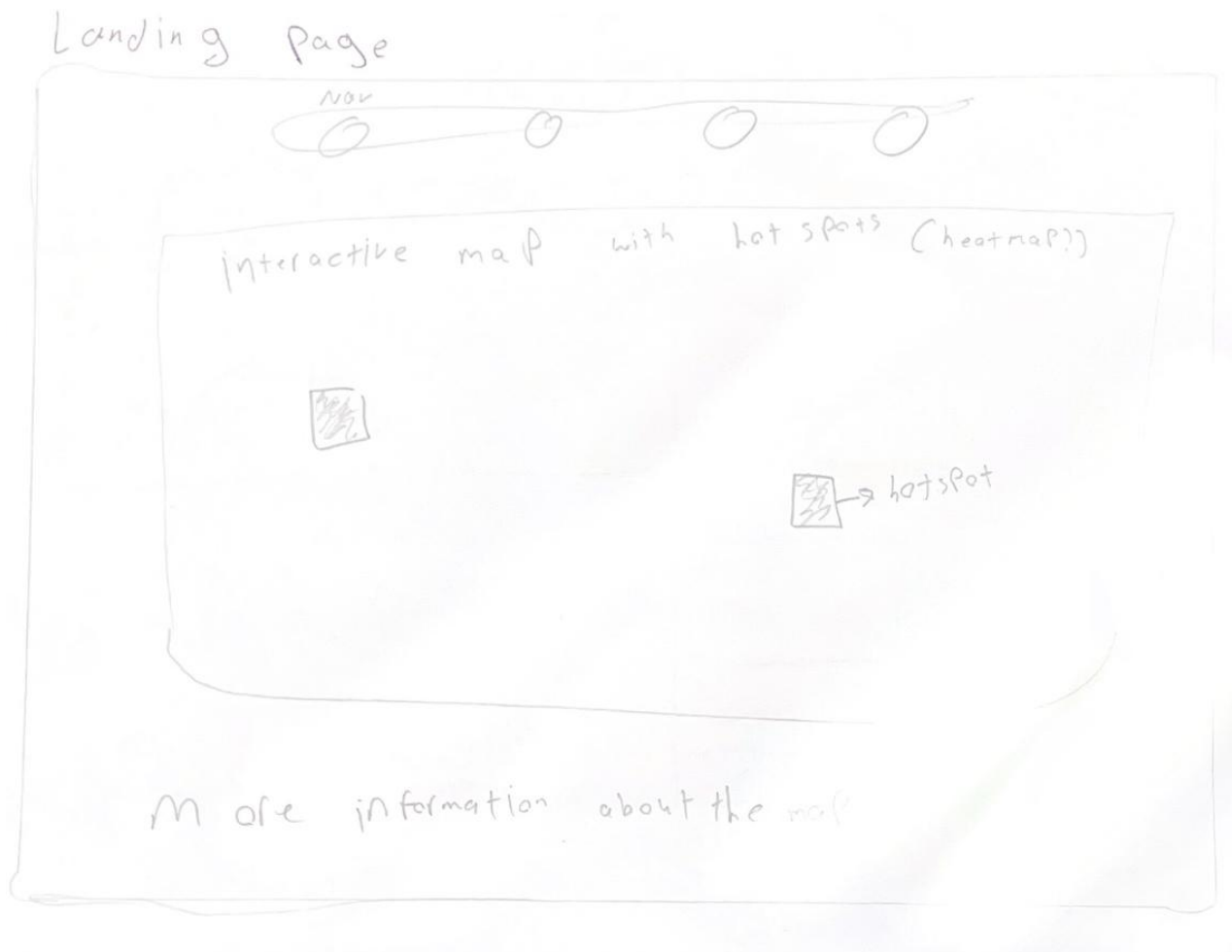
[Refugees are](#)

The second project is refugees. One of the causes of xenophobia against refugees, according to Unicef, is the media. News "bubbles" can create division in host communities, and filtered information that focuses on negative stereotypes of refugees can make it difficult for refugees and host communities to communicate and integrate, creating an isolated and disenfranchised community. This dashboard provides an explanation of the GDELT-extracted news narrative regarding migrants and refugees. From the calendar on the top side, choose a date to view the outcomes for that date. 1 June 2018 is the default date. Daily data are currently available for June 2018. This project shows the world views on refugees. It collects news articles to talk about refugees either good, bad or neutral.

[Meet Fadak | The Global Compact on Refugees | Digital platform](#)

Meet Fadak is a project to bring people together by showing how good attitudes toward refugees resulted in a better outcome for refugees and they were able to adapt to their new lifestyle better. Through collaborations with the corporate sector, public sector (including municipal, state, and national governments), ethical corporations, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and community groups, Fadak worked to reach an audience of hundreds of thousands. As part of the evaluation of the speaking events, participants were asked how much their views and behaviours had changed as a result of hearing the speakers' personal tales. Participants reported that they are more confident in confronting racism and the marginalization of refugees, that hearing Fadak (and other speakers) at the event helped them learn more about the subject, and that the speaking event changed their attitudes toward diversity, inclusion, and cohesion. These reports of significant attitude changes were displayed. This project was the inspiration behind having a page on the website where refugees can upload their own stories and share them with the world.

Appendix:



Landing Page

Nav

interactive map with hot spots (heatmap?)

→ hotspot

More information about the map

The landing page, it will have an interactive map and main hotspots (based on data)

Where do they fit?

Select a country [ Syria ☑ ]

2021 Syria had 3,110,908

which equals to { 3 concordia buildings } { 8 costoca warehouses }

This tab shows how the number of refugees is big. The user selects a country and gets a result

clicking on a hotspot
a story from the country

informative page: explaining
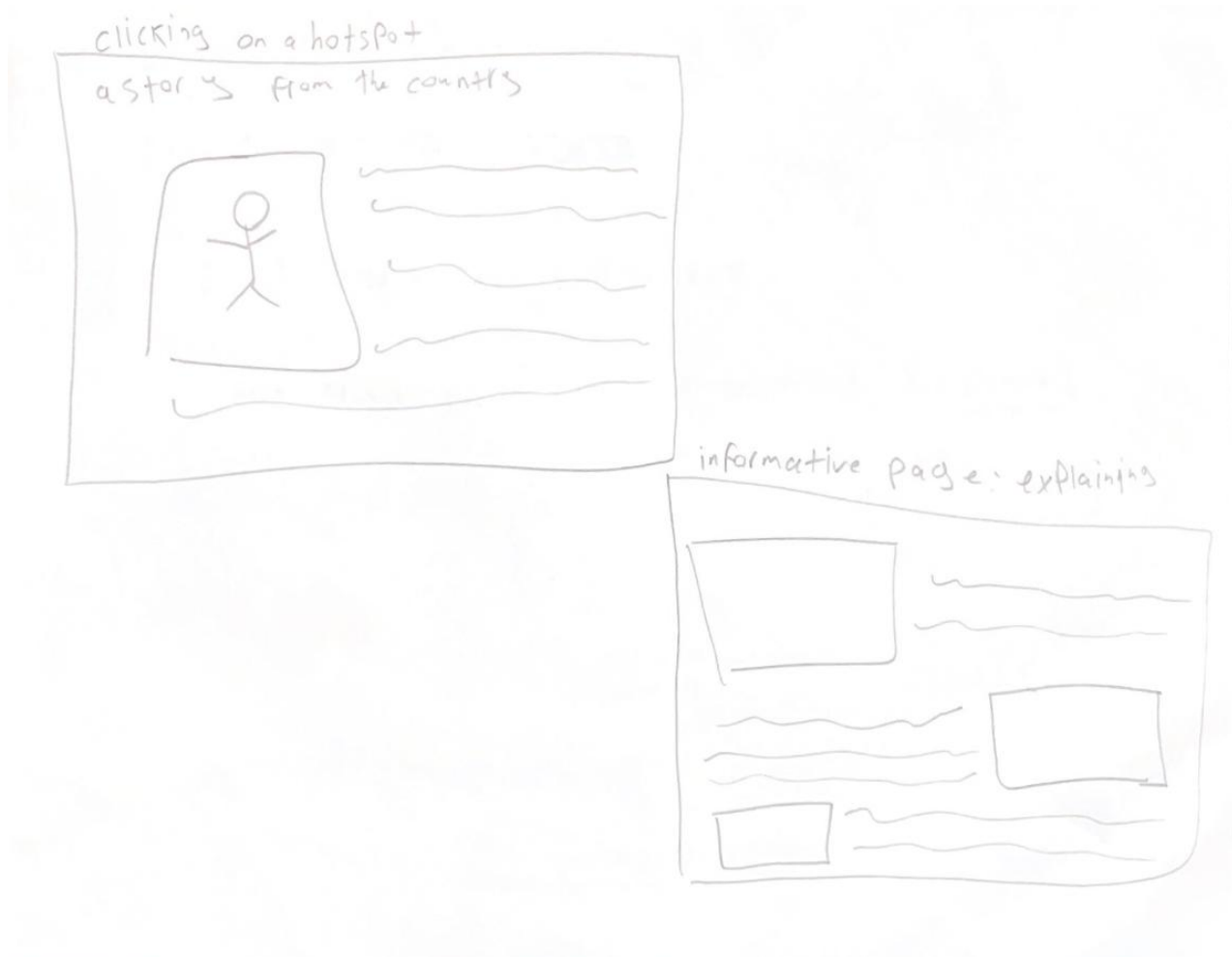
When the user clicks on a hotspot, they automatically go to a random refugee story from that country. The other tab is just the informative part, to explain the issue the project.

refugees share your story

form page

resources

this page will offer more
resources about the issue and
how they can learn more
about it

Lastly, the tab where refugees can share their stories in a form, and the resources page.