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Unsent Confessions

Unsent confessions is a web-based interactive project inspired by the emotional weight of things that are left unsaid. The core idea is to explore messages that were never sent, and to treat these messages as emotional artifacts on display rather than private drafts. This allows users to perhaps get something off their chests or speak their minds while remaining anonymous. The platform removes usernames, timestamps, and engagement metrics so that the focus stays on the emotional content rather than identity or performance. It is intentionally broad, so that the wall becomes a shared emotional space rather than a personalized feed. I wanted to highlight how emotional labor exists outside of direct communication and how shared or relatable experiences actually might be. It reflects an environment where messages exist between expression and restraint, written yet withheld, while often carrying unresolved emotions like grief, regret, sadness, love, anger, nostalgia, etc…

My motivation came from an interest and intrigue in how digital spaces can act as emotional containers. Opposite from private journaling, which is hidden, or social media, which tends to be performative and identity driven, the anonymous public confessions are visible yet detached from identity. They remove social consequences and self branding, which allows for more honest expression and lowers the barrier for vulnerability. I really wanted to explore how anonymity changes the way people express, what they may reveal, and how emotional ownership exists separate from personal attributions.

An essential aspect lies in the act of reading rather than just writing. Encountering others' thoughts can be unexpectedly comforting, revealing emotions that are widely and commonly shared yet rarely voiced. It can create a subtle sense of connection and reassurance, while at the same time still being engaging and even entertaining. This is really driven by the natural curiosity toward private thoughts that were never meant to be seen and wanting to know other peoples drama.

I was also motivated by questions of authorship and control in anonymous systems. If a message is anonymous, who owns it? Is it still yours without your name attached? The primary intention was to create a minimal, emotionally neutral interface that allows content to take precedence over identity. There is absolutely no social hierarchy beyond the act of posting itself. I avoided user profiles, usernames, likes, or metrics in order to maintain a reflective sort of atmosphere. Instead of likes or comments, this encourages quiet reading, recognition, and reflection to show how digital systems can hold emotional content without exploiting it.

Visually, the interface is heavily inspired by *The Unsent Project,* by using bold typography, bordered cards, and a restrained gridded layout with one sized 'cards' that intentionally resemble physical notes or letters. Each message/confession exists as a "card" with a customizable background color, to allow users another expressive dimension to communicate visually and convey desired tone without explicit explanation. The addition of emotion tags enforces another secondary layer of meaning and context. While the text is open ended, the emotion tag allows posts to be filtered and grouped, to encourage viewers to notice patterns across different emotional states. This balances individual expression with collective observation. The simplicity of the interface is intentional, allowing emotional content to remain the focal point rather than decorative elements.

At the same time I prioritized users' control over their content through deletion, to assure that anonymity didn't mean a loss of agency. Messages can be deleted, but only by the user who created them and only from the same session/token. This reinforces expression without permanence, visibility without identity, and ownership without authorship.

Technically, the project is built using Flask for backend, MongoDB for data storage, and JavaScript for client-side interaction. This allowed entries to be updated and evolved constantly while each post stored the message, intended recipient, emotion tag, background color, text color, and a unique token. A crucial challenge was implementing a sense of ownership without compromising anonymity. Instead of user accounts, a random token when a user first visits the site is generated and stored as a browser cookie. When a post is created the token is saved alongside it in the database. On future visits the server compares the user's cookie token and the tokens associated with each post to determine whether deletion is permitted. This allowed the system to differentiate between users without ever knowing who they are. Importantly, this token is not transferable across devices or browsers; if a user clears cookies or switches devices, deletion access is lost. This is intentional and reinforces the emphasis on impermanence and local ownership. JavaScript handles the dynamic behaviors such as color selection, text color contrast, filtering, and rendering posts. It also took care of ensuring readability by enforcing contrast rules (like, white text on black cards). This ensured accessibility while maintaining aesthetic design and coherence.

The project was developed using Python, Flask, MongoDB Atlas, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. External resources include the MongoDB documentation, Flask documentation, and general web accessibility guidelines for color contrast. Considerable iteration was required to balance aesthetic goals with functional constraints, particularly in implementing the color and text contrast system.

The expected outcome of Unsent Confessions is not a traditional interactive experience with goals or progression, but rather an evolving emotional archive shaped by collective participation. The project invites users to pause, reflect, and contribute without expectation of response. Over time, the wall becomes a snapshot of shared emotional states rather than individual narratives. By removing identity while preserving a sense of ownership, the project demonstrates that anonymity does not have to mean chaos or lack of boundaries. Instead, it can foster a quieter, more introspective form of participation. Ultimately, Unsent Confessions functions as both a technical experiment and an emotional space. It explores how minimal systems can hold complex feelings, and how thoughtful technical constraints can meaningfully support conceptual intent rather than undermine it.