**Project Description**

**Project Title**

**Life in Waiting: Documenting Manila’s Traffic Epidemic**

**Team members**

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**Goal (What are you trying to do? Articulate your objectives using absolutely no jargon.)**

We plan to develop an app that collects and aggregates emotional, sensual, and quantitative data from Manilla commuters and communicates that data to our clients, CMU History dept researchers, in a digestible format. Ultimately, this app should give voice to a larger scope of of vulnerabile. Under-recognized parties for reception and feedback by policy holders. As a stretch goal, we would like to integrate forms of anonymous social networking to the app.

**Current Practice (What is known, how is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?)**

Currents there aren’t any apps that we are aware of that specifically collects research data for transportation. Instead, people discuss and rant on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) after the fact. People generally are too busy to document their experience during their commute. There are several transportation apps that popular in Manila (as seen [here](https://www.spot.ph/newsfeatures/53926/10-apps-to-help-you-deal-with-life-in-metro-manila?fbclid=IwAR1oa0aBVYdZq08ws9bta0NCA2LYTmHsUlrJYX08YeWX6d2QTwFHJYN6Eqs)), but they all give transportation and traffic information to the user (like Google Maps) rather than the other way around. These apps also offer quantitative data rather than qualitative and emotion-based data.

**Our Approach (What is new in your approach, and why do you think it will be successful?)**

Our general approach is to create an application for users to document and report traffic situations for data collection purposes. This will primarily focus on giving information to researchers rather than providing users the information they need. The users will provide the community with digital storytelling mediums such as videos of their trips to show qualitative data.

**Who cares? (What group of people cares about this work? Also, if you succeed, what difference will it make?)**

The scope of this project touches the lives of several groups of people, namely: Noah and the team that he accrews in order to conduct research because of the fact that they will be using the app to view the compilation of information submitted to them by participants (and hopefully additionally using it to keep in touch with them or to communicate with participants about their experience in order to glean more details). In addition to that, the actual research participants (who we understand to be residents of Manila whom use public transportation in their everyday life) are a group we expect to be influenced by the result of compiling and sharing the research. That brings us to the last group of people we hope to influence as a result of this app; policy makes in Manila: we feel that if this work gains enough traction and attention from the participants that it could bring global/national social awareness to this issue and provide policy makers with a perspective that is often and unfortunately ignored (though it comes from those most affected by the current traffic epidemic).

**Risks (What are the biggest risks? What ideas do you have for mitigating risks?)**

In terms of developing the product, there are several points that we need to anticipate and carefully consider because there are potential unintended consequences and unpredicted user behaviors that could affect ideal data collection. One of the concern is about the accessibility of this app for different types of users. Compared to users who mainly use more public and crowded transportation methods, those who commute in cars may have freedom of using phone. This could lead to a bias in data because researchers may lose hands on data from population without cars. Another risk touches on matter of anonymity. Anonymity makes the “social” part of this harder -- we need to make sure that the people using this platform feel minimal consequences from this, if any at all. Behind the wall of anonymity, users could also misuse and cause undesirable results. Accidental documentation of illegal activity is an example of unintended consequences. Ability to clearly communicate to researchers the frustration and feelings during these trips is a consideration point. Research participants’ feelings may dissipate if recorded later on in the day which could influence the accuracy of the post itself. For example, the mode of digital storytelling may not be conducive to the clarity or accuracy of the experiences. Lastly, risk of having the form that goes with the video/audio/photo is how effort-demanding the app becomes to users. If documenting takes too long, users may not want to take the time to fill out the whole thing. Therefore, we should consider having a minimum amount of information to be useful to researchers

**Mid-term check (What do you want to accomplish by the midterm presentation?)**

We will organize and analyze the research information received from Noah Theriault and create a stakeholder map, personas, and storyboards. We will also solidify the features we want to incorporate into the two versions of the app (one app that has a smaller development scope, and one with a larger scope to include potential social media features). We would then create a lo-fi mockup that is ready for sample user-testing.

**Final check (What do you want to accomplish by the final presentation?)**

By the final presentation, we would like to have two lo-fi working prototypes: one that represent a minimum viable product, and another that represents our stretch goals and application of social networks to the app. Because we expect this product to be shipped to development later on, we want to ensure that the features that we prototype have flexibility in terms of integration. In terms of presentation, we expect to have a full report that discusses our process including our user research and findings. We would also like to have a plan for looking forward, and feedback to be given to Noah and his team.

**3 / 4 Presentations - Feedback**

**DisConnections**

* Adin Adler
  + You mentioned making the data accessible to both users and researchers, do you know what types of formatting you’re planning for your data? You might have to do conversions between users, who want individualized and less numeric data, and researchers, who want data they can analyze.
  + Are there predictions for how the transportation issues have developed over time? Do people expect the traffic to get worse in the coming years? Rather than just making an app that collects data, the app might also give access to data *over time* which is very different than day to day information. Data over weeks or months is often more important to researchers than individual days.
* Aaron Meyers
  + You briefly touched on a concern about the safety of individual users and took steps to maintain the anonymity of users, but I don’t really quite understand what the motivation for this is. Is there a concern unique to Manila commuters that they face if they are de-anonymized, or is it just the usual, general concerns that often accompany anonymity apply?
  + You brought up a risk related to the accuracy and credibility of the given stories, seemingly based on their format which you stated was not conducive to research, but you didn’t really address the problem at all. What exactly is your plan for addressing this?
* Adela Kapuscinska
  + Documenting and giving an outlet for user experiences of the Manila Traffic Crisis is great - as long as you keep it anonymous. I worry about videos and photos, since those can be traced back to the users.
  + How will you sift through the uploaded data - so that it isn’t just complaints? What is expected of people’s uploads? How will you enforce that/will you enforce that?
  + How will you encourage posting?
* OLynnvia
  + Is there incentive for users to use the app beyond just communicating to researchers? Are you trying to also promote a community, or other things that will prevent if from feeling like a chore?
  + You do mention accuracy/abuse of anonymity, but how will you deal with people actively lying, either purely to be a troll or to try to get their local bus route more attention/potential funding than it would otherwise get?
* Liz, the one and only
  + I think there’s only one Liz in the whole world

**Worm Club**

* Sherry Wu
  + I think that with the crowdsourcing approach, it would be great if you could provide some kind of rewarding system - like how the Transit app does to encourage user to contribute to the data source, as well as how this contribution of data would be benefiting themselves
  + I am wondering how you would be conducting the research and approach this problem without going onsite? I imagine that the traffic situation there to be very different from the traffic situations here.
* Chris Reyes
  + I guess with any kind of platform there may need to be some sort of feedback or incentive. Do users feel they gain anything from contributing? If it just feels good to vent the first couple times they might lose interest if they feel that their contributions are just winding up in a digital void somewhere.
  + Do you think you might give specific prompts for people to contribute towards? My concern for something so qualitative is that you might not get the best quality or most relevant content served up, so how can you guide your users to provide researchers materials they can work with?
  + I’m obviously not an expert on the social politics of Manila, but I’m assuming that class has a big impact on how people travel in the city — would it be worth trying to find ways to distinguish those subgroups?
* Allissa Chan
  + Are you going to have considerations for documentation in different languages? I understand that for the scope of this class I guess English is fine but I’m curious if, particularly if you want to reach out to the widest variety of users, there’ll be support for users to tell stories in whatever they’re most comfortable (and if so, how will you handle/ sort this data?)
  + Like some other people brought up, what’s the motivating factor for people to contribute to this? Is this just framed as something you can do if you’re frustrated with your transportation and want to vent or help with it, or is there some other explanation/ motivation?
  + Related to anonymity: I assume if this is a platform people use to tell stories on a regular basis about their daily commutes, at some point there’s going to be a level of identification where someone could theoretically get a handle on their everyday movements - specific location data might be important for what you’re trying to learn, how are you going to address this kind of stored data (is this just not accessible to anyone not a researcher)?

4/1 Presentation Feedback

Team Instagram

Riva:

* You went really in-depth with the persona creation. I think this helps a lot with understanding the type of people that you are working with. I’m not sure if you addressed this already, but maybe dive a bit deeper into the different areas for improvement with current transportation methods and get a better understanding of the pain points that currently exist for users.
* Good job outlining all the different use cases. How are you going to prioritize them? The low-fi prototypes look really good! How do you plan on user testing them with people that match your personas and iterating?

Arushi:

* I really liked the Persona Development slide. Associating the project with specific people and their specific stories makes the project a lot more real and easier to understand
* Have you looked into if any other cities besides Manila have faced similar problems and what social technologies they’ve used to address it?

Jackie:

* Love how detailed all of the prototyping and mapping is!!
* Has the possibility of trolls who might purposely report inaccurately come up in discussion? Do you have a plan to deal with this possibility? (blocking, reporting, etc)
* Have you considered maybe adding a feature that would allow users to specifically report predators or other dangers in specific features? I know in America a lot of people deal with harassment on public transportation, and I’m not sure what it’s like in Manila, but perhaps that might be useful for users.

Prachi:

* Great, detailed development of personas. I would suggest breaking down the personas into specific factors that can be directly compared to each other
* Have you considered adding a persona for a person that is extremely wealthy just to have a wide spread of people?
* It could be interesting to point out unique factors about Manila that contribute to the transportation issue. There are definitely other cities that face issues like this, so it may be useful to single out how Manila’s issues are different than others.
* What issue is the most pressing? Expensive or efficiency?
* Emotional map page: This is an interesting idea but why do you think that this would act as an incentive for users? It is a bit unclear how that would entice users. I do think that it is an interesting feature with lots of potential but I think it needs to be hashed out more.

Jessica Cheng:

* I couldn’t really hear, but are the personas real people or imagined users of the app? If they’re based on real people, it could be helpful to discuss more in-depth the interviews you conducted with them
* For the data submission, maybe it’ll be helpful to have a webapp version of the mobile app for in-depth submissions/documentation. This way, the mobile app can be used for maybe “preliminary” submissions and a webapp part can be used to expand on the preliminary submissions, for ease of typing. I personally stay away from long form typing on the phone just because it’s more difficult and wouldn’t be motivated to make in-depth submissions on the mobile app alone.
* I really like the user flow/map

Team GaryOneLove:

Simrin:

* I like the use of a structured approach to understanding the needs and requirements of the project through user stories, a vehicular analysis, and realizing use cases. I do not however see a connection between your research and the use cases. I wish that was a little more clear.
* I think I missed the portion of testing your paper prototype
* Maybe A/B testing would work well in your case to nail down the prototype
* Are there any privacy concerns when you have user generated content and photos as in your app?

Joe:

* Personas were very well developed - gave a very good sense to the user to the potential users of the app.
* Low fidelity prototypes look very promising, also lots of detail. I liked seeing the process between the paper prototypes and the low fidelity

David:

* I like the idea of the emotion map. I think that it is a good way for people to quickly see which paths they should take. It would only work if a lot of users were willing to open the app and input their emotions during travel. One way of doing this would be to use location services and track when someone is traveling, and then notify them to use the app

Lera:

* I like the very detailed approach for developing the personas. However, I am not sure whether there was any research done that would support such personas, and justify why they are representative of the Manila population.
* Was Noah the only resource for you in terms of understanding the local culture? Maybe, you could consult other resources as well to understand the people better, thus coming up with some support to your research.
* I really liked the way you did research on the transportation methods! Very conscience, and helps to understand the city dynamics.
* The low-fidelity prototypes looked very cool and neat! I think that something like emotion map may benefit not only the users, but also Noah’s research eventually.
* Do you plan to user test your final product, or you rely on Noah’s judgement? I think it would be very beneficial to try to test it on, for example, users in Pittsburgh, and thus judge the usability and improve based on the real user feedback.

Feedback from Geoff: Really great progress since the last presentation! A lot of work has gone into thinking through the user flow and identifying the key communication elements that you’re incorporating into your design. I think it will be key to test out some of these elements with local users, finding proxies for the types of transportation that are predominant in Manila (e.g., students who commute by car, bus, foot, CMU shuttle, Uber/Lyft) and create a Wizard of Oz version of your app for them to try out some of the reporting and narrativization functionality you envision the app including. This will give you some preliminary sense of the extent to which these design elements are feasible and/or meaningful to users, which would be extremely useful for Noah’s purposes as well. My one (gentle) caution would be to be wary of feature creep -- you want to avoid overloading your app (and users of your app) with too many options and/or too many demands when it comes to documenting and sharing their experience. Your user testing will help in this regard -- that is, it’s okay if you give too many features to your sample, because they’ll be able to give you feedback about which elements they found more interesting, user-friendly, etc. Keep up the excellent work - and let me know anytime if you’d like to meet to discuss your design/research process as you hit the final phase of your project!