

Project Documentation

Winter 2017

Who Says You Can't Bill Gates:

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Project Plan Project Info

Project Name

MomentO

Project Team

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Project Definition

Problem Statement

Human beings have an innate drive to fulfill their base needs, among them finding a sense of belonging, bonding with one another, and having their feelings and observations validated. We believe that current predominate social media platforms fall short of fulfilling these needs, and in fact may even work to starve their users of these needs.

Background & Context

MomentO focuses on the journey we take as individuals to find purpose, meaning and fulfillment in life. For many of us, technology has changed the way we socialize. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube have pushed social interactions to shorter, less personal, and more trivial exchanges. This has left certain core elements of socialization in the dust. Our project will focus on modernizing those elements and building a platform that delivers a more human centric method of sharing and connecting by focusing on the age old universal of storytelling.

Goals & Outcomes

Our goal is to create a commercial platform that empowers the world to fulfill their hierarchy of needs. We're especially focused around love and belonging, self esteem, and self-actualization. We envision the end product to provide novel means of transferring information, obtaining monetary value, and living life to the fullest.

Audiences

Our product aims to reach out to everyone who desires any type of social and personal development, wishes to use an easy-to-use and aesthetically pleasing journaling platform, and would like to profit from sharing their thoughts and stories.

Constraints

Time

Our project team is allowed till the end of Spring 2017 to complete a working, serviceable, and impressive iteration of MomentO.

Money

Our project team consists of college undergraduates who do not have a high budget at their disposal.

Education/Experience

We might run into issues where we want to implement a feature, but are unable to due to a lack of experience or education with a certain technology or subject matter (for example, certain types of programming expertise).

Moore's Law Isn't Fast Enough

Some of the imagined or proposed features of our project may be beyond the capability of contemporary technology.

Risks

We have identified several fundamental risks of varying severity.

Propaganda Campaigns

As the user-base and value of MomentO expands, MomentO may become a desirable target for persons with strongly held convictions and large budgets to exploit the platform to proliferate hateful messages so as to advance personal, political, economic or social vendettas and transform the culture of Moment-O to one of outrage, doubt and discontent through a determined double propaganda and social-engineering campaign. Such a scenario would severely limit the demographics of MomentO and threaten its profitability and reputation.

Hacking

There is the possibility that MomentO will be used to host incredibly private information such as thoughts and feelings being both a journaling and social media platform, and because of this,

MomentO may also be a desirable target for hacking attacks by those who would wish to violate the privacy of our users so as to profit off of their personal information or use it for their own illicit means.

The Delicacy of Trust

As a journaling platform that our users may use to host private information and banking details, our users are in a position of exceptional vulnerability; to inadvertently break their trust could spell the demise of MomentO.

Diversity Risk

Despite any project team's best efforts, it is always possible that the team's membership does not fully represent the interests of its intended users. We will be naturally predisposed to design for ourselves, rather than an audience of diverse ages, genders, ethnicities, and cultures.

Attrition

Unforeseen circumstances could cause team members to leave the group before completion, jeopardizing our ability to deliver a fully featured and functioning iteration of MomentO.

Resources, Experts & Tools

- Information about our competitors (Such as Facebook, Reddit, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, Tumblr, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+)
- Data Science lab (Michael Freeman, Jevin West, other Data Science professionals)
- Mobile Development Teachers (Ted Neward, Joel Ross)
- Mobile Design Teachers (Brian Fling)
- CyberSecurity Professionals/Teachers (Andrew McKenna, Daniel Schwalbe)
- Risk Management Professionals/Professors (Anne Searle)
- Database professionals (Greg Hay)
- iOS-Xcode/Swift/Objective C, Android Dev-Java, JavaScript, BootStrap, HTML/CSS, JQuery
- Textacy:
 - textacy is a Python library for performing higher-level natural language processing (NLP) tasks, built on the high-performance spaCy library. With the basics --- tokenization, part-of-speech tagging, dependency parsing, etc. --offloaded to another library, textacy focuses on tasks facilitated by the ready availability of tokenized, POS-tagged, and parsed text.

Project Timeline

This timeline will reflect our most recent understanding of the project and the activities necessary to bring it to fruition. It will contain our fixed deliverable due dates, but the periods in-between are subject to change.

Week #	Calendar Week	Activity	Deliverable(s)
Week 0	Jan. 4 - Jan. 6	Discussion/ Team-Bonding/ Choosing Name	
Week 1	Jan. 9 - Jan. 13	Competitive analysis	Project Plan (Jan. 11)Summary of Competition
Week 2	Jan. 16 - Jan. 20	User research	PersonasStoryboard
Week 3	Jan. 23 - Jan. 27	Further research	• 10x10 comp. matrix
Week 4	Jan. 30 - Feb. 3		Data Model Strategy brief (Feb. 1)
Week 5	Feb. 6 - Feb. 10		User journey map
Week 6	Feb. 13 - Feb. 17	Wireframing, wireframing revision	Prototype
Week 7	Feb. 20 - Feb. 24	Discuss and debate merits of wireframes; come up with cohesive one	Messaging framework
Week 8	Feb. 27 - March 3	Design user survey & send out (?)	Design blueprint (Mar. 1)
Week 9	March 6 - March 10	Record footage and audio with Joel's equipment; edit video. Discuss revised documentation roles for assign #4	Pitch video (Mar. 8)
Week 10	March 13 - March 17	Incorporate feedback into documents and do assigned parts as discussed Mar. 10.	Revised Documentation (Mar. 15)
Week 11	March 20 - March 24	Spring Break Set up development environments, begin collaborating. Validate prototype with informal user testing.	Initial commits to a GitHub repository; "hello world" app. Polish prototype further before quarter starts.

Week 12	March 27 - March 31	Epic 1: Account creation & mgmt	Creating accountPrivacy controls
Week 13	April 3 - April 7	Epic 1: Account creation & mgmt	Profile customization (avatar, banner)Password recovery
Week 14	April 10 - April 14	Epic 2: Story browsing	Browse related storiesBrowse stories by topic
Week 15	April 17 - April 21	Epic 2: Story browsing	 Save viewed post history Popular/trending stories Visualize own stories in the tree
Week 16	April 24 - April 28	Epic 3: Story creation & mgmt	Privacy controls for individual storiesDuration controls
Week 17	May 1 - May 5	Epic 3: Story creation & mgmt	 History controls (edit, delete posts) Receive points for contributions
Week 18	May 8 - May 12	Epic 4: Community interaction	 Viewing past stories and reaction metrics Replying to stories Houses feature
Week 19	May 15 - May 19	Epic 4: Community interaction	 Houses admin tools (delete, flag, etc) Relationship visibility controls (friends list public or no?) Add, block, follow users & trees
Week 20	May 22 - May 26	Padding space	Padding space
Week 21	May 29 - June 2	Resolve all known lingering issues and review unit tests	•
Week 22	June 5 - June 9	Prepare for capstone night	Final deliverable & presentation

Competitive Matrix

Social validation & cultivating connection

Competitor	lssue #1: Social validation.	Issue #2: Cultivating connection.
StoryCorps	 StoryCorps doesn't have a system for receiving social validation for the storytellers, besides the possibility of having your story archived in the Library of Congress and published via the site and podcast. StoryCorps has zero comment sections. This lack of a system protects storytellers and users from the bevy of negative, noisy, or divisive feedback. StoryCorps is one of the few sites for storytellers that provides no avenue for feedback. 	 StoryCorps' mission, stated in the center of their front page, is "to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world." By collecting, archiving, and sharing stories across the world, they hope to forge connections across humanity. This manual curation of insightful stories serves to humanize our species. StoryCorps is distinct in that it aims to cultivate connection simply through the act of sharing stories; this is similar to our aims.
LiveJournal	 Users are able to comment on a person's specific journal entries. There is no system of upvotes or downvotes. The number of comments, entries, and the number of people reading certain journals/blogs allows certain journals to be put into the top journals of the day and all time. People respond to user's content in ways different than simply liking or disliking but actually taking time to comment on and regularly read journal entries a certain user writes. 	 A specific journal can sprout discussion between the person that posted the journal entry responding to people that post comments about a specific journal entry. Connections are also cultivated through users being 'friends' with another, which allows people to access more protected entries and allows the entries of friends to appear on the user's friends page. Users can also become part of communities. The 'friends' options gives people the ability to choose who gets to read certain journal entries they may post, giving them more control over privacy. People can connect over certain stories through comments. It's distinct in the dynamic it creates. People can start journals about different topics that allows people to read/comment on topics they feel an attachment to. The community that surrounds certain journal entries feels more close-knit than comments on a certain YouTube video, for example.
Cowbird	 How: Telling your story on Cowbird and having it read by others around the world is a helpful reminder that other care about your life experiences. You can also build a collection of your life events which can be a very rewarding. Benefits: While not as validating as some other 	 How: Pictures, stories, and people makes these stories imaginable and relatable. Since you can easily communicate with story writers and there are even suggested stories at the end of each one, it's not hard to see how people feel connected to one another.

• Benefits: Storytelling is a natural way of bonding

visual element of the story also make it more

enjoyable to experience.

and sharing experiences between people. The

• Distinction: Cowbird focuses on exceptional human

stories. This can cause people to come together

social media websites. Cowbird focuses on

you like.

spreading validation for the stories you feel matter.

Whether they are your own or someone else's that

Distinction: Unlike many social media platforms,

Cowbird focuses on validation through important

Blogs (e.g. powered by blogger.com)

and meaningful moments in people's life. The reward for this level of validation may be more valued because it is scarce in the current fast paced social media world of today.

- Users can comment and reblog but typically there is no up/downvote mechanism.
- People can express their opinions only in words. Content can't be buried by downvote brigades. Comments can usually be moderated by the author. Users can have involved discussion with people who share their interests, and can track down the original source from reblogs.
- The focus is on the author's content and not the author's popularity. Validation comes strictly from what people say, not how they vote.

- because of the content of the story. This set up of the site also fosters communication between readers and authors.
- There is no overt effort to cultivate connection. The onus is on the reader to find blogs they can connect with, through searching, word-of-mouth, or content aggregation sites, and then leaving comments. Otherwise the connection might come from outside the web (see postsecrets.com).
- The visibility of blog comments is generally lower than, say, Facebook comments, and content is more difficult to find organically. Connections are perhaps more difficult to forge, less visible, but therefore less superficial.
- Blogs sometimes convey a relatable autobiographical story, like StoryCorps, but can be about anything.

FanFiction.net

- Authors post fanfics and users can favorite, follow, and review them. "Reviews" is a misnomer; the content of a review is usually a reaction to specific chapters or a low-effort comments (e.g., "I'm shocked by ch. 4").
- The popularity of a fanfic can be gauged by the quantity of favorites and follows, but its "unpopularity" can only be discerned by negative reviews. This might encourage users to post content.
- There is a distinct lack of a robust ranking system. The quality of a fanfic is not apparent at a glance.

- There's no concept of adding a friend. Interacting with others is limited to leaving reviews or sending PMs
- The lack of a friend system reduces the complexity of permissions systems and makes the site easier to implement. It encourages the one-sided relationship of author -> readership.
- The distinction is that users must form friendships informally. Friendships can be entirely invisible/private if users communicate via PM rather than public reviews.

SnapChat

- Users can post specific pictures with captions on a SnapChat story that can be viewed by others
- Can change pictures using filters and themes, as well as add captions.
- Tells user if the person they sent their picture to takes a screenshot of the picture or replays the picture.
- Snapchat stories allow users to post pictures to their stories and see who has viewed their story.
- Allows users to send pictures to friends that disappear after viewing.
- Pictures disappear, and if people want their pictures to be seen by more people they can post to their Snapchat story
- Snapchat is distinct because the pictures disappear, taking away the unease that people sometimes feel when they send their pictures to others. It gives them more freedom to send funny pictures.

Facebook

- Social validation is measured in comments and little response-quantifications (it used to be 'likes'--now there's several responses users may choose from).
- Facebook's response-quantifications are incredibly effective; they're simple and effortless, requiring only a single click to dole out virtual social validation.
- The 'like' is iconic; despite Facebook's expansion into other response-quantifications, its brand continues to be synonymous with 'likes.'
- Facebook's massive social network includes almost-everybody-you-know; you can connect to their accounts, so long as your invitations are accepted.
- Facebook allows one to exclusively connect to only persons they want to connect to, empowering users with the ability to reject or accept 'invites' to share information and permit connection.
- Facebook is distinct in its amount of users, and the fact that users are required to operate under their true names and encouraged to share photographs and other personal details to their real-world social network made Facebook optimal for popular discussion outside of the network itself, extending its reach beyond the digital world.

Tumblr

- How: Users can build a collection of thing they find to be valuable and share them with friends/strangers. They can receive social fulfillment through the number of likes and reblogs. Direct messages and comments can also lead to various levels of validation.
- Benefits: You can quantify how many people "like" your content and care about the things you care about.
- Distinction: Your content can grow and be discovered by more people than you're connected with. You can meet people over content.
- How: Tumblr allows for content creators to share
 posts that they create or that they've found to their
 followers. Additionally users who visit the content
 creator's Tumblr will be able to see a waterfall style
 list of all of the post ever made by the creator.
 Viewers can show appreciation/connection/value
 by sending direct messages, commenting,
 reblogging, or liking.
- Benefits: Tumblr allows content to "Tumble" through different networks of people allowing for easy content sharing and easy traces back to the origin of the content. The infrastructure is optimized for blogging: the act of sharing parts of one's life in a journal style on the web for others to see. It allows users to customize their Tumblr for personalization.
- Distinction: People connect over love for certain types of content.

Reddit

- Social validation is distributed in the form of up-votes; the more up-votes a post receives, the higher it appear on Reddit's content lists, thus attaching up-votes to further visibility. With "Reddit Gold," users can validate posts that they enjoy or approve of by paying a small fee to boost the exposure of said posts.
- Social validation is effortless to distribute; all it takes is a single click, and these up-votes are easy to quantify and compare.
- Reddit 'up-votes' and 'gold' are about as iconic as Facebook 'likes.'
- Users are given anonymous usernames, thus detaching their personal identities from their Reddit posts. Furthermore, users may create, subscribe, and engage with "subreddits" related to their interests, thus forming distinct communities of like-minded individuals.
- Because of this anonymity, users may feel more compelled to share stories and insights that they would otherwise keep quiet if they were attached to their name and face.
- Reddit is one of the few large social media sites actively encouraging anonymous discussion; this was a popular trend years ago, and such sites have become increasingly rare since the inception of Facebook.

Twitter

- Retweets, likes, and follows are low-effort but remind the recipient that someone is reading and paying attention to the minutia of their life
- Rather than being kept inside, these small tidbits that may not be worth sharing elsewhere can be released and turned into social validation.
- The small size of Tweets is iconic and makes it a medium unto itself, e.g. 'Twitter humor' is relatively formulaic but will always elicit a positive response from followers
- Companies, celebrities, and the general public are allowed accounts; theoretically, a user may "Tweet" at notable persons and they would theoretically read it, or use the platform to publicly humiliate out-of-touch pizza and junk-food companies.
 Tweets can be shared and liked.
- Like Facebook, the amount of users on Twitter is unprecedented.
- Twitter is less of a platform for communication and more a platform for the mass distribution of short, textual information.

Storing content & profiting users

Competi tor **Issue #3: Storing content.**

Issue #4: Profiting users.

StoryCor ps

- StoryCorps distributes and stores content at the Library of Congress and American Folklife Center, as well as on their website in the form of audio podcasts and animations.
- Podcasts can be listened to while performing tasks that require your eyes (unlike reading) and have the pleasant intimacy of hearing another's voice. The animations allow storytellers to see their tales animated, which they may not have been able to do themselves.
- Podcasts and radio have been a method of storytelling for a very long time, but StoryCorps is remarkable in that its mission is one of preservation; it keeps copies in two different government agencies, as well as their own.

- StoryCorps does not profit users, readers, or listeners, nor does it profit the storytellers.
- Users are assumed to approach StoryCorps for personal enjoyment or enrichment, rather than be incentivized by monetary gain. Storytellers are not given a platform for self-promotion, either; they're often ordinary people, rather than those with images or products to sell such as politicians and celebrities.
- Many other story-sharing services do not profit users. This has the benefit of making the storytelling appear genuine by removing any fiscal incentive.

LiveJour nal

- Users have a 'journal' which in many ways is like a blog they will update through repeated entries. Users can post videos, pictures, stories, as well as hide something until clicked for suspenseful effect.
- There are multiple different ways to express yourself as a user, don't have to use only writing to be able to add an entry to a journal.
- Journals are both live and dynamic as well as unique in the type of content within each one. Ths gives users unique ways in order to express themselves and share their experiences/opinions with others in different ways.
- Users can write about their experiences and opinions in their journals while also making them accessible to others.
- Users are able to develop in both social and personal ways. They are able to get the reflective and personal development benefits that any type of journal writing may bring but also the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions with other people if they choose to do so. Users are also able to promote their journals for 100 tokens.
- Being able to develop both socially and personally is not something seen a lot in today's social media networks. This provides reflection and fully written out stories and thoughts while also building communities that can support these stories, experiences, and opinions.

Cowbird

- How: Cowbird claims to act as a public library of exceptional human stories. Thus it seems that the website keeps track of your stories and stores the data. Perhaps a server or some cloud storage method for keeping your stories.
- Benefits: You don't have to worry about the backend of telling your stories. You can just post and forget.
- Distinction: This approach is very similar to what many other websites do to. However, it is significant to note that Cowbird does not focus on making money so they have a way to store content without much cost.
- How: Cowbird does not offer any monetary value for its users but rather focuses on allowing users to share stories.
- Benefits: Without any money involved, there aren't any mixed signals with what the goals and purpose of the website is. It keeps the focus of the website on the act of storytelling.
- Distinction: Without money flow, this website acts more as a charity. It keeps the purpose clear. This place acts as a simple place to share stories.

Blogs (e.g. powered by blogger.c om)

- Posts and comments usually do not have a cap on quantity. A platform such as blogger.com can have 100 contributing authors per blog and 100 blogs per account.¹ Content is ostensibly stored indefinitely, but the author retains a lot of control.
- A large number of collaborators can be vetted and then allowed to post content revolving around a central theme on a single blog.
- The authorship of a blog can be more exclusive than the authorship of a subreddit, and old posts aren't locked after a period of inactivity.
- Users who self-host blogs can use advertisements freely. WordPress.com and Blogger have their own ad systems for eligible blog owners (WordAds and AdSense). Both allow the selling of merchandise.
- Users can profit from their original work in a straightforward way.
- Original content can earn its creator money using the platform's tools much more easily than on social network sites, FF.net, or storytelling projects.

¹ http://www.mybloggerlab.com/2013/02/what-are-limitations-of-blogger-account.html

FanFictio n.net

- Stories, forum posts and reviews are stored indefinitely, unless they violate content guidelines, or the intellectual property owner makes a copyright claim. An author can only delete their stories, not their account, comments, or forum posts.
- The friction of "blanking" an account discourages authors from wiping their content entirely. Secondary content has staying power.
- Users have a distinct lack of control over all their content except their stories.
- No way for authors to monetize stories. This might discourage pandering based on what's profitable.
- FF.net benefits from the work of authors. Authors benefit from having a free publishing platform.
- Authors can't sell their work on this platform, in contrast e.g. to DeviantArt where visual artists can sell their prints.

SnapCha

- Content is transient and disappears after viewing. However, pictures can be saved to a Snapchat "story" if user chooses, and it can be viewed by others.
- Private content can be easily shared as it will disappear
- Distinct because pictures are not stored and users will know if the people they sent a particular picture to save their picture using screenshot.
- Users can follow celebrities on SnapChat to see their Snapchat stories
- Companies can sponsor filters on Snapchat for users to use as well as put ads on Snapchat that show up between the Snapchat stories being viewed by the user
- Sponsored filters are often unique and temporary ways users can take pictures and videos of themselves in new ways to send to others or add to their stories.
- Snapchat live allows users to post live stories that are published and can be viewed by anyone on Snapchat, these stories are often related to a specific topic
- Snapchat is unique in that it gives users a variety of what to do with pictures they take both in how the picture looks as well as the amount of time the picture is still "alive" and who sees it. If the user wants to make the picture temporary, then can, but they can also make it permanent if they want.

Faceboo

- User's timeline goes back to the inception of the user's profile. Facebook will proudly tell you that your account is never deleted, but rather, deactivated.
 User information is diligently stored and traded.
- Facebook profits from advertisers by trading user information and selling targeted advertisements aimed at users with distinct traits, who would be more conducive to purchasing the advertiser's product.
- Facebook stores highly personal information in the form of photographs, thoughts, familial and friendly relationships, and interests, making for a powerful database in the hands of any advertiser.
- Facebook monetizes videos with commercials and provides a popular platform for business-to-consumer communication and promotion.
- The sheer ubiquity of Facebook provides a massive surface area for promotion and commercial exposure.
- Facebook's popular use is its primary distinction; the name is immediately recognized.

Tumblr

- How: Your Tumblr is kept track of by the companies servers. Posts that "tumble" are not redundant. The maintain their form and are passed around the community with different text and tags
- Benefits: The tag system makes it easy to organize posts.
- Distinction: Unlike other platforms that have a uniform design, Tumblr allows for customizations on appearance.
- How: Tumblr generates revenue by putting sponsored post or ads in the user's feed.
- Benefits: The platform is free
- Distinction: Sponsored posts fit the schematic of how user sought content. Ads are focused around content users seems interested in.

Reddit

- Content is stored indefinitely, but discussion is locked upon archiving. Users may delete their accounts and posts, wiping any sign of their presence to other users, though the possible
- Reddit is a relatively large platform, and despite its anonymity, persons and companies whose posts rise to the top of Reddit's front page and subreddits are allowed massive exposure that may be leveraged to

- recovery of such information has been proven.
- As data is never deleted, Reddit may recover content for law enforcement and other inquiring agencies.
- This is fairly standard practice nowadays with the decline of storage prices; data is never fully deleted.
- turn a profit, whether it be in web page views or in enhanced brand identity.
- The benefit here is that profit via Reddit exposure is naturally seen as better "deserved," as the users of Reddit have validated this person's popularity with "up-votes."
- This is very similar to profit-from-exposure via YouTube, Tumblr, Facebook and Twitter.

Twitter

- Oldest Tweets are eventually archived; users may delete their Tweets, though these may be recovered or documented via screenshot.
- As Tweets are limited to a specific amount of characters, the storage of this data is relatively light, given the massive amount of users and activity on the platform.
- Twitter does not have a distinct system of data storage.
- Corporate users use Twitter to build their brand.
 They craft a persona, a human face for the company that creates the illusion of a corporate personality.
- Twitter is somewhere between anonymized and named - some people use their real names, others use unrelated user handles. This allows fictionalized personalities to coexist with real ones and gain an air of 'realness'
- Social media marketing on Twitter is quick, easy, and very rewarding. All it takes is an intern to manage the account

Adoption & sharing

Competitor	Issue #5: Adoption.	Issue #6: Sharing
StoryCorps	 Storytellers may meet with the StoryCorps "Mobile Tour," a travelling Airstream trailer serving as an audio booth from which to share stories for the archive. They may also share their stories at the Library of Congress or at another travelling tour, which switches from city to city across America. StoryCorps is very centralized and professional, guaranteeing quality content by restricting the window of its availability to storytellers. The other services we have discussed are more liberal with who may tell stories and who may not. StoryCorps is based in "reality;" that is to say, stories are told by voice and in an audio booth, rather than by keyboard or phone. 	 Stories are delivered via animations, podcast, and website, having been archived at the Library of Congress and American Folklife Center. Podcasts may be listened to while performing tasks demanding of one's eyes, such as driving and lifting weights. StoryCorps is audio-based, unlike the other services we have in our competitive matrix.
LiveJournal	 Many people have the opportunity to share and document their experiences and opinions. They also have the opportunity to be part of communities with similar opinions, beliefs, and experiences that they can connect to. People are able to use technology to develop themselves and foster social relationships and be part of communities through ideas. This is distinct because the communities and social interactions are more close-knit. Users are able to connect to others and can choose to what degree they want to connect to others. They are able to choose what parts of their journal they wish to share with certain people. 	 Users are able to share through the entries they post in their live journals. They can share thoughts, experiences, and opinions through a variety of ways including words, pictures, and video. Users are able to share in a variety of different ways and able to express themselves in multiple ways. Users can add friends they can specifically share certain, locked entries in their journal with. This gives them freedom in what they want to share. Users are able to choose what parts of their journal they wish to share with certain people, making this unique. They can also choose to be part of communities they can share specifically

Cowbird

- How: Cowbird's slogan "A witness to life" show what the purpose of the site is: to document and share moments of life. Many people have put up stories about their life. This seems to work as a wishful activity, sharing your life stories for others to read.
- Benefits: If you want to share stories, this is a good place.
- Distinction: This style of activity seems to best fit a older more mature audiences. The presence of many stories of variety make the adoption of this website easy. If you like what you see, there is a lot of it.

to.

- How: Once you find a story by searching, you can see related stories when you finish and you can connect with the author by sending them a message or checking their profile.
- Benefits: You can find a thread of stories that you enjoy and you can also narrow down the content by author.
- Distinction: Trying to connect stories by related content is an interesting approach. In a way you can chain through the content and get lost in the wealth of stories.

Blogs (e.g. powered by blogger.com)

- Blogging originated from online diaries and moderated Usenet newsgroups and had become popular by the late 1990s. Blogs became extremely popular and increasingly relevant in the mid-2000s. The number of blogs in existence is in the neighborhood of 150-170 million.²
- As the popularity of blogs has grown, the technical investment needed to start a blog has become very small. It's easy to start a blog through one of a handful of blog hosting providers.
- Highly versatile medium for publishing serial content & a medium indigenous to the web. Artists, politicians, journalists, foodies, and enthusiasts of all kinds author blogs.
- The blogosphere is all blogs taken collectively. It can be thought of as a network of all blogs that link to each other. Outside of the blogosphere, most bloggers also use Twitter and Facebook.
- Niches form organically from interlinking regions of the blogosphere; they aren't centrally aggregated or managed.
- The blogosphere is distinct from social media sites in that blogs are independently managed spaces. Social media sites are self-contained (networks of followers and followees exist within Twitter, not independently through hyperlinks).

FanFiction.net

- The site was founded in 1998, and within 4 years had 118,000 registered accounts -- today about 2.2 million accounts.
- Allowing content based on many different franchises made the FF.net the most popular fanfiction site in the world.
- The inclusivity of FF.net was distinct from most (all?) fanfiction sites before it. Its founder also claims that it was the first automated real-time story archiving site.
- There are options to share a fic on Google+, Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook, or the user can simply link to the fic to be shared.
- This allows FF.net to take advantage of the infrastructure provided by social media sites and let their users share fics with little friction
- The share buttons conspicuously lack options to share on Reddit, Blogger, email, etc. Otherwise there is no real distinction from any other sites that host original content.

SnapChat

- Gives people a unique way to connect to each other and socialize with one another.
- Changed how people can communicate using pictures, the reason people adopted it.
- The major benefit and unique identifier for Snapchat seems to be that it allows users to send pictures that are transient and temporary. Giving users the ability to have control over how long the pictures they send last is powerful.
- People are able to share through pictures, video, and chat. The pictures and videos are able to easily be manipulated through a variety of stickers, filters, and emojis. Users can add specific pictures and video to their snapchat stories so anyone of their friends can view certain pictures/videos if they wish to.
- There is a great variety in how users can share certain things. If what is seen is seen again ('replayed') or a screenshot is taken of it, the sender will know, allowing them more control over the information they have sent.
- Filters are unique but what is shared is limited in the time receivers can look at what was sent.
 Pictures and videos have a set amount of time they can be seen and chat disappears as soon

² https://www.quora.com/How-many-blogs-exist-in-the-world/answer/Robert-Charles-Lee?srid=ubOHc

		as it is read. This is unique compared to other similar platforms.
Facebook	 In order to access Facebook's goliath social network, one must register a Facebook account. Due to Facebook's initial exclusivity, it compels persons to register an account in order to access its network of just-about-everybody-with-web-access. Facebook's popular use is its primary distinction; the name is immediately recognized. 	 Sharing within Facebook is a matter of pressing Share and selecting the audience. Sharing outside of Facebook is a matter of sharing the permalink. The ease of sharing allows content to spread virally/organically through many different social circles and communities quickly. Sharing Facebook content requires the user to be wary of whether the audience of the share has the permissions to view the content being shared common among social sites. Not so among FF.net, StoryCorps, blogs & the like.
Tumblr	 How: Tumblr is often a place that artists exclusively share their art. More similar art can be found easily too. This draws users who want to browse. The platform also fits blogging well. Thus people who want to share tidbits of their lives are attracted. Benefits: Easy to share and easy to consume. It's a place where your creativity can reach can reach lots of people while being traceable back to the creator. Distinction: focus on blogging and sharing art. Has small communities that form around common likes. Anonymity encapsulates personal information. 	 How: Sharing in tumblr is easy, when you see something you like, you can reblog or like. This will make the content appear on your own tumblr blog. You can also follow tumblr blogs that you like so that their content appears on your feed. Benefits: Each person builds a collection of what they like that is easy to browse. Tag helps make content easy to search through and provides a organization structure. Distinction: Users build value the more they browse and the more the like/reblog with helps other creators get recognition for their work.
Reddit	 Sites that filled the same niche went out of fashion (Digg) & Reddit provided the technical ability for users to self-organize communities based on their interests, which was a perfect formula for tech-savvy users to begin adopting it. As posts began to go viral, the appeal and culture of the site broadened. Allowing users to organize into subreddits ensured that anyone could belong on the site. Highly threaded discussion, voting, and self-organized communities resulted in a relatively democratized platform 	 Content can be shared across subreddits by manually copying and pasting the desired content to the desired destination subreddit. Any publically visible content (a few subreddits are private) can be shared across communities with wildly different interests. Reddit posts can easily be permalinked to, without requiring the user following the link to have an account or special permissions.
Twitter	 Twitter was initially a service for Odeo employees. It went public, then Tweet volume tripled from 20,000/day to 60,000/day during a SXSWi event. As Its usefulness as an "information network" became clear, volume increased 250x between 2007 and 2008. Adoption benefited from the ease of use, addictiveness of microblogging, and later the importance of spreading information rapidly (Arab Spring, incidents of terrorism). 	 Sharing within Twitter requires reblogging. Sharing outside of Twitter requires permalinking. Much like with Facebook, reblogging allows content to spread quickly through many social circles. The benefit to the original authors of Tweets is that their Tweet is usually shared unadulterated. Because of Twitter's limited character allowance, reblogs are usually made with limited new commentary by the reblogger.

Spring, incidents of terrorism).
Follow relationships are built on information consumption more so than social ties³

new commentary by the reblogger.

³ http://wwwconference.org/proceedings/www2014/companion/p493.pdf

Entry point & brand image

Competitor	lssue #7: Entry point	Issue #8: Brand image
StoryCorps	 StoryCorps has no obvious entry point besides their website and podcast. StoryCorps is mentioned often on NPR and similar cultural circles. StoryCorps appears to be targeted towards radio-listeners. This is fitting, as StoryCorps is an audio-based service. As mentioned in other cells above, StoryCorps is distinct from our other competitors in that it is primarily an audio storytelling service. 	 StoryCorps presents a very life-affirming image. Its front page is full of thumbnails of pairs of storytellers smiling and embracing. The animations are simple, and hip or cartoonish, they're often humorous and inoffensive. They are very explicit about a desire to preserve and promote humanity. StoryCorps has a very benevolent image. StoryCorps has an exceptionally focused mission that guides its image, and this mission is not shared among our other competitors, though it's similar to our own; both Momento and StoryCorps seek to enrich the lives of others via story.
LiveJournal	 The major entry point is their website and signing up to create a journal. Users are able to have their own journal/blog posted on this website to be able to share with other people. As mentioned in other cells, it is unique in that it allows users to be able to get the reflective benefits that come with writing in a classic pen-paper journal but also comes with social benefits in that other users can see/comment on journal entries. 	 LiveJournal proves a social network that can be private or public and can be accessible to people in different regions such as Russia and Japan. It appeals to a wider scope of people in that it allows personal and social development and gives people more control over what they share. People have more control over what they share. They can make the whole experience of making a journal and writing in it private if they choose to do so. People can use this for both social development and personal development reasons.
Cowbird	 How: I heard of Cowbird from Professor Nam Ho (class instructor) I imagine that much of the growth of the site is due to word of mouth. Upon reaching the site itself there is a wealth of visual appeal, lots of pictures of people which you can click on to see the story. The search bar itself cycles through example searches which in intriguing and enticing. Benefits: Having a good landing page makes it easy to want to explore and come back as a user. Because the possibilities of potential stories it can be difficult to know what to look for. Cowbird alleviates that information overload by providing examples. Distinction: auto filling the search field with a variety of possible search terms sparks imagination. If you make it to the page, you might get hooked. 	 How: Cowbirds brand icon consists of a bird with black and white spotted pattern like a cow. When you hover over the bird on the homepage, you hear a bird twitter followed by a cow mooing. The common line/slogan is "A witness to life" just like a cowbird might be a witness to life. Benefits: Having a real animal attached to the brand of the site makes the name and purpose memorable. Recalling the simple cowbird could remind people what the site's main goals and purpose is. Distinction: I thought the sound was a hit or miss. It's distinctive because no other website I've visited has an audio cue for the brand however, when we consider companies like McDonald's we see than brand audio cue can be very effective and memorable.
Blogs (e.g. powered by blogger.com)	 The entry point to reading blogs is any individual blog, found by word-of-mouth recommendation, searches, etc. The entry point to blogging is any blog host. Nowadays these usually provide a strong tutorial for publishing a first post. 	 The branding of a blog varies wildly. The fact that any blog can have its own brand makes it relatively easy to build a web presence, or even a news/media company. Competitors host content created by their

Every blog can inspire other blogs. The basics of publishing a post can be learned in minutes from a tutorial.

 This medium/competitor requires the user to seek out or stumble upon a blog. It seems a bit harder to browse blogs in the same way as browsing Facebook posts or FanFiction.net entries. users, but therein a user doesn't have a brand so much as a persona. Competitors prominently stamp pages containing user content with their logo; usually not so with popular blogs.

FanFiction.net

- The top sources of traffic are direct to FF.net, and referrals. Each account for about a third of traffic. The rest is from searches, social websites and email.⁴ However, the landing page provides no clear entry point. Feeds for new/popular posts are hidden in the navigation menu.
- The benefit of referrals is that referred users are likely to enjoy the content and stick around, because the referring sites host similar content. The landing page design is detrimental; the majority of screen real estate is consumed by site news, which a new user doesn't care about. The rest is devoted mostly to a list of genres.
- There is no enticing hook for new users on the landing page, which is an odd approach.
- The impression left by FF.net is that it is a site for hardcore fans. Users have to have a strong passion for their favored franchises. Using the site requires a lot of reading and filtering can get quite involved, which is reflective of the fact that fanfiction is still an involved, niche hobby. FF.net relies on a lot of investment from a "nerd" audience and is not a brand for casual audiences
- The technical and emotional involvement required by this brand dissuade casual audiences. The branding seems weak and forgettable.
- When I think of FF.net, I think of it more as a medium than as a brand. Things are published on FanFiction.net; fan blogs are part of, i.e., Tumblr.

SnapChat

- The entry point is the mobile application. The main page of the application allows to immediately take a picture or video and then leads to who the user wishes to send it to.
- Easy to immediately send information to people in different ways (through picture, video, or chat)
- Whatever is shared is temporary, only lasts a set amount of time.
- Pictures, video, and chat sent are temporary, do not last longer than a set amount of time.
- People can send embarrassing pictures/videos without the stress of pictures and videos being kept to embarrass them with later.
- Snapchat manipulated an aspect to sharing information that hasn't really been done by other similar social platforms and that's manipulating the time the information can be accessed to the person it was sent to.

Facebook

- The entry points are via web searches for a person's name, invitations from friends to join (e.g. by email or word-of-mouth) or material enticements from organization (e.g. "Like and share our post for a chance to win!"). Facebook displays the pictures and names of public profiles for a logged-out user referred by a web search. It simply and succinctly states "Log in or sign up for Facebook to connect with friends, family and people you know."
- Coming from a web search, it's immediately apparent what the benefit of having a Facebook account is: access to listings and profiles of people.
- Most websites don't explain their purpose this clearly and succinctly to incoming new users.

eople.

Tumblr

How: tumblrs are often shared online or in person.
 They are a center point for collections of similar content. Most of the time people are introduced to tumblr because of interest in some type of content (e.g. video games fan art). Sometime when sharing con

- Although Facebook is a time killer, primarily a
 way to talk to friends and share your life, in
 some ways it positions itself as a ubiquitous,
 utilitarian directory of people, a book of faces.
 Metaphorically, it resembles a phonebook and
 phone put together.
- Facebook succeeds in being many things for many people partly because it brands itself as such. There's no gimmick or niche. It's intended to be used by all.
- Facebook makes no attempt to be edgy or quirky. It doesn't rely on a gimmick like arbitrary character maximums (Twitter) or self-destruct timers (Snapchat).
- How: tumblr builds off of the Facebook style. It's icon is a simple lowercase "t" in a blue background.
- Benefits: looks like it might be related to Facebook
- Distinction: because of the style of the brand,

⁴ https://www.similarweb.com/website/FanFiction.net

	Benefits:Distinction	it's obvious that it might be a social network. It's simple and piggybacks off of Facebook's popularity.
Reddit	 The entry point for a new Redditor is either a Reddit post shared with them, or the Reddit front page itself. Most users' first steps are to visit the front page to understand what Reddit is about. The front page by default is a collection of the most popular posts on the site. The interface may be confusing at first, but the front page can immediately convey what type of content is most popular on Reddit, by example. Theoretically, new users see the best of Reddit first-thing. Lots of sites have a feed of popular or fresh content on their landing page. Reddit admins curate the default front page content to the extent that they choose the subreddits whose top posts are displayed, and periodically change these "default subs." 	 Reddit calls itself the "front page of the Internet." Since it aggregates content from all over the web, it has an Internet-cosmopolitan feel. It strives to enable free speech and dialogue. It has democratic elements in that subreddits are mostly managed autonomously and content is pushed to the top by popular approval. It is also an open-source project. These combine to make its image one of entertainment and openness. The created brand has wide appeal in cultures whose values include openness, freedom, and variety, and entertainment including Internet culture. Reddit is one of the few popular, open-source social mediums.
Twitter	 Twitter seems to display one random Tweet & photo at a time on its landing page for users who are not logged in. Being linked to a Tweet without knowing what Twitter is can be kind of confusing. The front page gives a sample of the kind of content a user can expect. This sample has high variability; it doesn't indicate what tends to be popular, only a random subset of what can and does exist on Twitter. Compare to Reddit where the front page is an indication of what is popular on Reddit at large. 	 Twitter's mission is to "give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers." Its mention easily evokes the experience; a deluge of topical information in bite-sized pieces. A single Tweet isn't expected to be groundbreaking, but many Tweets define a movement; the low barrier/expectation encourages participation. Twitter's nature as a deluge of information is an activism barometer, and more generally a

Demographics & moneymaking strategy

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Competitor	Issue #9: Demographics	lssue #10: Moneymaking strategy
StoryCorps	 Stories are entirely in English, and the traveling StoryCorps program is exclusive to the United States. While StoryCorps states that their mission is to preserve the stories of humanity for the "world," it appears to be primarily Americocentric. StoryCorps promotes itself on radio and in podcasting circles; this makes sense, as StoryCorps is an audio-based storytelling platform. StoryCorps' America-specific focus makes storytellers economical to access, as StoryCorps never has to employ, say, translators or invest in ways to travel outside of the nation. StoryCorps is restricted by its format; the audio booth has to travel, and to travel requires money. Because of this, StoryCorps is restricted to the United States, unlike the other web-based services 	 StoryCorps is a nonprofit organization (501(c)(3)) funded by donations, recurring membership fees and corporate sponsorships. Persons "anywhere in America" can also pay to have StoryCorps record their story sessions for a day, the fee for this starting at \$8,000. This is restricted to "mission-driven institutions who are highly collaborative and whose engagement helps StoryCorps to advance [their] work and mission." StoryCorps' nonprofit status further projects an image as a benevolent organization focused on its singular image to cultivate connections between humanity via storytelling. StoryCorps is the only 501(c)(3) on our competitive matrix.

barometer of social trends.

of our competitive matrix.

LiveJournal

- LiveJournal is primarily used by English-Speakers, but is the option to change the language to multiple different languages such as Portuguese, Russian, French, etc. The majority of people using it were in the 17-25 age group with an high group of 32 year-olds as well.
- Being able to change the language allows it to be accessible to more people. Although people in the United States use it the most, there is a significant number of people using the website in Russian.
- Multiple languages allows this to be a unique platform where journals of multiple languages, from different locations, and different experiences can all be shown.
- Users can get a paid account to be able to get extra features. Certain features need to be bought.
- Free users still get a considerable amount of control with privacy controls for their journal.
 The company still makes profit off the paid accounts and the volunteer efforts that support them.
- It is unique that some areas of LiveJournal rely heavily on user contributions and volunteer efforts such as the LiveJournal Support area.

Cowbird

- How: Many of the people on Cowbird seem to be adults well past college. Sampling some of the stories, it seemed that many of the stories come from older people with some sounding like stories my parents might tell.
- Benefits: The purpose of the website matches the demographic. Having a site about sharing a journey requires many years of experience. Understanding that journey requires similar years of experience as well.
- Distinction: There is a definite demographic of older people here. It helps foster a community of people who are genuinely interested in the mission of Cowbird.
- How: there doesn't seem to be any monetization strategy for Cowbird. There are no ads, there isn't a fee to signup, and there aren't any requests for donations.
- Benefits: not having a monetization strategy make the purpose of the website clear. There aren't any ulterior motives only the telling and sharing of stories.
- Distinction: without a flow of capital, it's interesting how Cowbird manages to keep its service up.

Blogs (e.g. powered by blogger.com)

- Blog demographics tend to have equal proportions of either sex with roughly half of bloggers between 21 and 35 years of age. Top five countries in order are USA (by far), UK, Japan, Brazil and Canada, accounting for about half of bloggers.⁵
- Publishing via a blog, an author is more likely to reach equal amounts of men and women and audiences that are older than teenage than on sites like FF.net or Pinterest. This is assuming the demographics of blog readers are similar to those of bloggers.
- The proportions of either sex are unusually balanced for the Internet, and bloggers tend to be older than most users of social media sites.

- How a blogger can profit from a blog is discussed in a prior cell. Blog hosts usually just take a cut of the advertising revenue.
- All the blog host has to is provide the infrastructure. Their users provide the content, which drives the audience for the blog host's ads.
- Distinct from platforms that don't attempt to make money from user content, like FF.net or StoryCorps.

FanFiction.ne

- More than half of users are in the U.S. The next 3 largest groups are also Anglophone (each comprising less than a tenth of users). The only non-Anglophone country in the top 5 groups is the Philippines. About three fourths of users are female and one fourth are male. The average age is 15.8 and the median is 15.6.
- These national and sex demographics are probably
- FF.net is not-for-profit. It reportedly uses ads to support administrative costs. However, I encountered no ads while browsing with AdBlock disabled, though I could find complaints about ads on the site in the past while Googling around.
- Being a non-profit probably reduces the complexity of legal issues surrounding

⁵ https://sysomos.com/reports/blogger-demographics

⁶ http://ffnresearch.blogspot.com/2011/03/fan-fiction-demographics-in-2010-age.html

determined by the demographics that partake in fanfiction itself. Fanfiction is dominated by women⁷, and modern fanfiction is held to have originated from the (American) Star Trek franchise in the '60s.

- As discussed in lecture, having a teenage audience is an advantage because teenagers tend to be early adopters and trendsetters (also mentioned in this BI article⁹).
- FF.net's age demographics are similar to those of social media sites like Tumblr. They are distinct among our competitors for having a massive female audience.

fan-created works derived from existing intellectual property. It also reduces pressure to restrict useful features to paid memberships. User experience benefits when websites aren't trying to squeeze money from users.

 The dearth of ads and monetization is a distinction from sites like DeviantArt, which also hosts fan works.

SnapChat

- The main demographic that uses SnapChat has been millennials.
- This age group find SnapChat to be fun and interesting/useful in the self-deleting, temporary way information is sent/accessed.
- The way information that is sent is both self-deleting and temporary in the amount of time it can be accessed is unique.
- SnapChat makes money off of the ads that play between SnapChat stories that a user is looking through of another user. They also profit from branded filters.
- The company can make money off ads that are conveniently placed for both the user and the company.
- The stories feature in SnapChat is unique in itself and the fact that ads are interspersed between stories encourages users to watch them.

Facebook

- ~80% of people between 18 and 49 who use the Internet use Facebook, but only about half of people 65 or older.¹⁰ 76% of female U.S. Internet users use Facebook, compared to 66% for males.
- Facebook is able to reach a wide variety of people
 with their services as their are multiple ways and
 communities that a person can share their thoughts
 to. The ability to express oneself in multiple ways
 allows this and the size of platform allows it to
 increase as more people are able to connect with
 more of their friends.
- This is the most equitable age distribution among competitors analyzed

- Facebook is primarily in the information business. It makes money through skillfully targeted ads.
- Facebook can profit off of what its users willfully share about themselves.
- No other competitor has monetized its user base as efficiently, using biographical information to target ads with precision.

Tumblr

- How: There seem to be a large amount of minorities here. Groups I've seen: Filipino (ethnic minority), LGBT, Artists
- Benefits: Lots of chances to freely share thoughts and expressions. Communities are built around interests which tend to correlate with demographics
- Distinction: tumbler seems to be a safe space for minorities to build value. This is a niche that tumbler embodies well.
- How: tumbir has sponsored ads as well as ads in general
- Benefits: a lot of the ads are relevant to the content that you follow so they are interesting. The sponsored content maintains the same format are normal post.
- Distinction: Ads are sparse and relevant to users interests. The more time a user spends on tumblr the more ads they see and the more revenue tumblr generates.

Reddit

- Roughly two thirds of users are 18-29, two thirds
- Reddit allows users and corporations to sponsor

7

https://books.google.com/books?id=oCvIZpCSRA0C&lpg=PA112&ots=5-EkbayXwL&pg=PA112#v=onepage&f=false

⁸ http://www.ftlpublications.com/bwebook.pdf

⁹ http://www.businessinsider.com/demographics-of-social-media-by-gender-8-2015

¹⁰ https://blog.hootsuite.com/facebook-demographics/

- are men and one third are women, and 42% are college-educated¹¹. Top five countries are US (45.9%), India (11.8%), UK, Canada, Pakistan (last three all under 10%)¹².
- Reddit discussions about world news and events, AskReddit threads, etc. are interesting to read because each user offers a different life experience and viewpoint. Users often declare some of these characteristics about themselves, e.g. ("Being from India, my experience is that...").
- Reddit users have more varied national background than most competitors. Users tend to be slightly more educated and slightly older than other social media sites.

- posts. These appear in the feed alongside actual content and are marked as sponsored.
- Users get non-intrusive advertising that resembles normal Reddit posts, and are tailored to Reddit users.
- One aspect unique to Reddit is that these adverts are identical to user-submitted content except that they are sponsored. That is, users can comment and vote on them.

Twitter

- Some demographic info can be found here.
- The large international audience means information about current events, social movements and activism from around the world abounds. People post their opinions and experiences in short, digestible pieces. These stories can be very poignant, maybe because of their brevity and because pictures are "worth 1000 words" on this platform.
- Three-quarters of Twitter accounts originate from outside the U.S. This is among the most international competitors.
- Twitter allows marketers to purchase Tweets ("promoted" Tweets) and also licenses data for sale by other companies (revenues from this are an order of magnitude smaller than from Tweet promotion).¹³
- Users get tailored advertising in the format that they expect from actual content, minimizing disruptive advertising.
- Promoted content is a trend among social platforms, but Twitter arguably integrates this content the most fluidly.

User Research

Audience(s)

- Girls and boys aged around 12-17
- Men and women aged around 18-29
- English speakers
- People living in the West (i.e., not Asian markets, etc.)
- Tech users familiar with mobile/web apps
- Content consumers / lurkers / "explorers"
 - 90% of online community members are lurkers who never contribute (the 90-9-1 rule).
- Content creators / "sharers"
 - Remaining 10% of community members are contributors (the 90-9-1 rule).

http://www.journalism.org/2016/02/25/reddit-news-users-more-likely-to-be-male-young-and-digital-in-their-news-preferences/

¹¹

¹² http://www.snoosecret.com/statistics-about-reddit.html

¹³ http://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/120114/how-does-twitter-twtr-make-money.asp

Personas



https://flic.kr/p/7TpKrD

Robert Winstead, 15 y.o.

Robert is a gifted student at Sandpoint High School, Sandpoint, Idaho. He takes honors classes where he can and gets along with his classmates well enough, but spends his lunches quietly studying and doesn't see his friends outside of the school day. Most evenings are rather lonely, whether spent at home or working in the family general contracting business.

When trying to unwind, Robert likes to read /r/TIFU and other story-based subreddits. While he finds these entertaining, he doesn't find them relatable in a meaningful way. On /r/InternetIsBeautiful, he stumbles upon a link to MomentO. He starts to read the stories to see what it is all about, and finds he can use the site's tools to find thematically similar stories. On a whim, he looks up stories relating to 'bored' and 'lonely.' He reads them. One of the stories had an overt message, which was to step outside the bounds of one's comfort zone and make an effort to connect with others. Robert identifies with this story's author and resolves to carry out his advice.



Ryan Wright, 33 y.o.

Ryan is a Silicon Valley illustrado with gainful employment at Alphabet Inc., where he has a very important job as the head of a secret subterranean robotics lab in the San Francisco Bay. In his spare time, Ryan repairs typewriters and moonlights as a creative writing professor. Despite his job security and enviable salary, Ryan entertains fantasies of becoming a successful writer and living in a refurbished shipping container somewhere in the barren deserts of New Mexico, where he can run an entrepreneurial venture harvesting solar energy and psilocybin. Ryan meticulously analyzes the pros and cons of numerous platforms for storytellers across the web, looking for ripe audiences on which to test his latest poetry and prose, boost his literary notoriety, and sharpen his skill.

Johnny WorksAlot

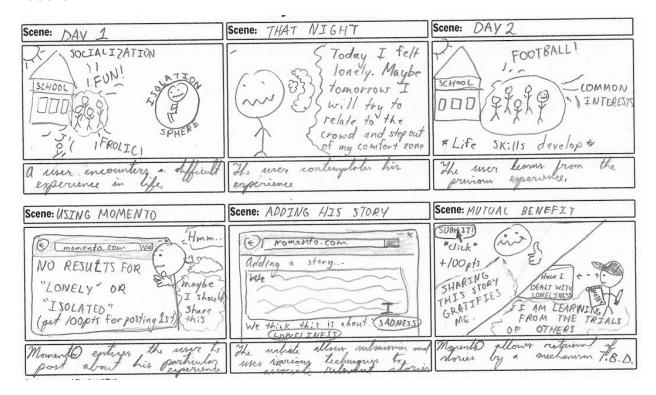
Works a fulltime job that does not include a large number of fulfilling social experiences. Lives in an area that's more removed from their old friends. Someone who works during the day, but don't have enough time for human interaction.

Sally Believer

A sophomore at the University of Washington who was trying to figure out what she wants to major in. One of her friends recommended that she try taking INFO 200. After taking the class, she was inspired. She loved that class so much that she is considering majoring in Informatics. However, the application process is scary to think about. She also is worried that Informatics might actually not be the right option for her. She wishes she could hear about other people's experiences both within Informatics and applying to it.

Storyboards

Eduard



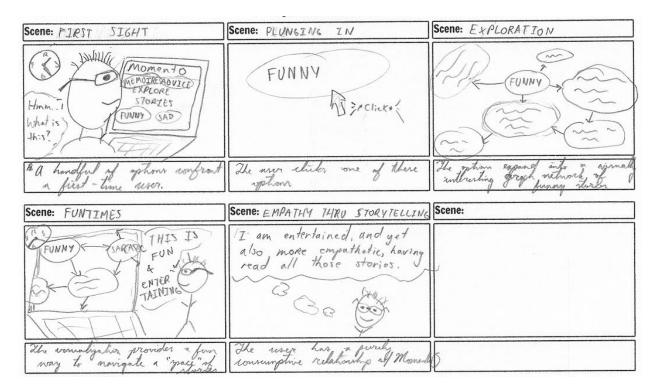
Audience Secondary-education-aged Western teenager who feels lonely or isolated. **Motivations** The user seeks to get better at intermingling with his peers. After learning from his difficult experience and being enticed by MomentO, he becomes motivated to share his story.

Context The character feels isolated because his interests don't intersect with those of his peers. He feels that he cannot relate to others.

Information needs What have people in similar situations done to resolve their social problems? What sort of outlets exist for the user's emotions?

Interactions One user posts a story based on first-hand experience on our platform. Another user reads and benefits from this experience.

Outcomes The first user has used an outlet for his emotions constructively, hopefully in a way that fulfills his esteem needs. The other user (last panel) can use the first user's experience in carving out their love and belongingness needs.



Audience A bored college-aged male seeking to pass time on the Internet. This is a person who enjoys Internet content with a story-based element; think TIFU, FML, TIGL (Today I Got Lucky) stories that are popular on the Internet.

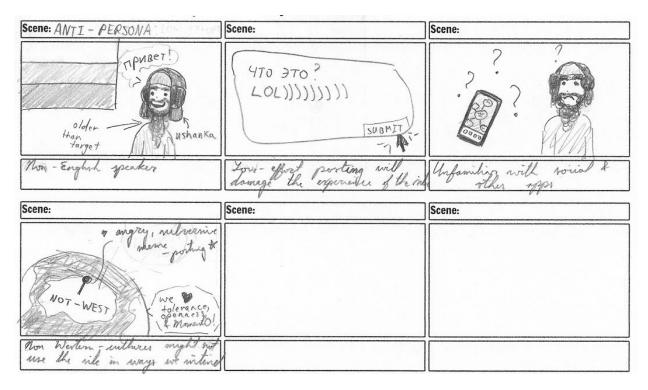
Motivations The user seeks a pastime. Stumbling upon MomentO, the user is motivated to investigate by the novelty of the site.

Context The character has free time. He was referred to MomentO, perhaps by a friend or from a Reddit post. To begin with, he has no idea what the website is for.

Information needs What novel content can the user read for entertainment? Where are some humanizing stories he can relate to?

Interactions The user explores a hypothetical browsing feature of the product. He trawls through various categories and reads posts that are members of those categories. These stories have a human element, focusing on the first-hand experiences of the writer.

Outcomes The user gains entertainment value. As a byproduct of consuming the stories, he is empathetic towards the situations expressed by the writers.



Audience This user is an instance of an anti-persona. He is a non-English-speaking user (in this case a Russian speaker in a Slavic country) and a low-effort poster in his thirties.

Motivations This user, too, seeks a pastime. The user wants to post on MomentO despite not having lurked and understood its purpose. He seeks to gain attention or validation, as all of us do on some level, by posting content.

Context The character has free time. His contributions are ignorant of the purpose of MomentO. These contributions may be incidentally malicious, but are not necessarily so.

Information needs What is a budding online community the user can join? Where can he post to the greatest effect?

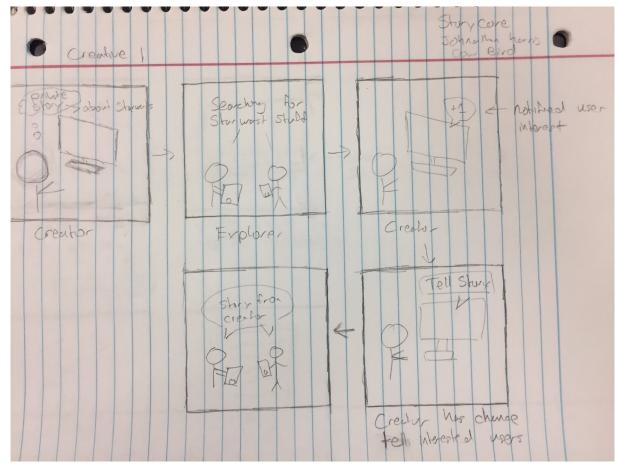
Interactions The user adds a submission in the first place he sees. He wilfully or accidentally disrupts the tone and intended content of MomentO stories.

Outcomes The user gains entertainment value. The user experiences of others suffer. The platform consumes resources in hosting low-effort posts and moderating them.

Joel



Christopher



Audience In this storyboard, we are addressing a creative writer working on a story they are interested writing..

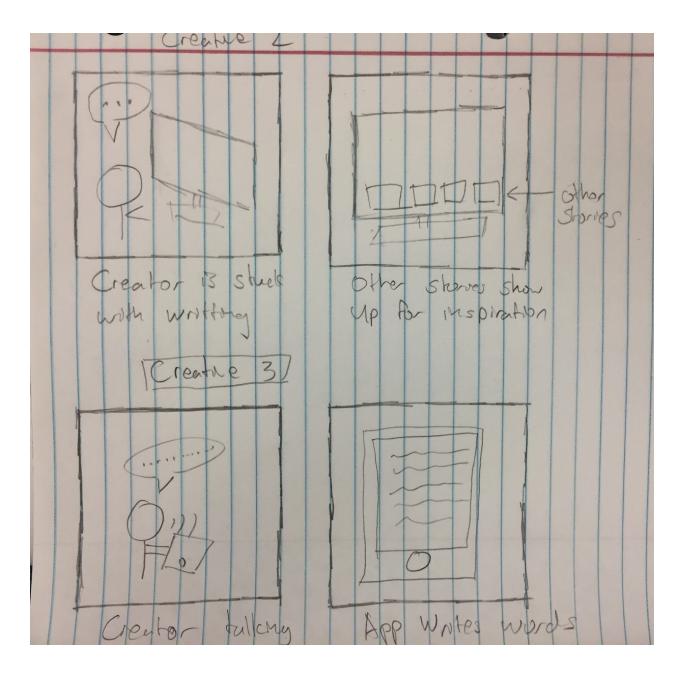
Motivations Writing a story can be hard and the writer is struggling. Motivation grows thin as the writer works.

Context The writer is trying to express their creativity and create content that they think others might enjoy.

Information needs As a creative writer, it is difficult to know if your work is worthwhile. There is a huge investment in writing a story. Knowing ahead of time if others are interested can help boost the motivation of the writer.

Interactions Content consumers search for content that interests them. Because they are searching, people who have related content are shown that there is interest in what they are creating. It shows that others what the content they are creating.

Outcomes Both the content creator and content consumers get validation. The creator shares relevant content to the consumers wants. Everyone feels like they matter.



Sanchya

Audience The first storyboard (of the paper section below) focuses on a sophomore in college embarking on trying to get into the Informatics program at UW.

Motivations This person wants tips on how to apply to the major as well as wants to know more about experiences in the major in order to see if it is truly the right fit for her.

Context She is scared to apply to the major as she doesn't know if it is the right decision for her or if she can even get in.

Information needs Information from people who had relevant experiences within the major she could connect to and see if they would fit in. Information on how others approached the

application.

Interactions Connecting with people who have the information and experiences she wants to learn more about and connect to.

Outcomes Getting the information she needs to be able to apply to the major with confidence and see if it is the right fit for her.



Audience A typical college freshman astounded by the events occurring in the world around him.

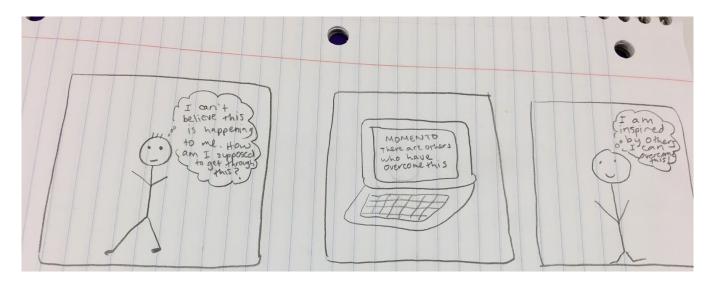
Motivations He wants to write about his life because he believes he is living through important times that will go down in history.

Context There is so much going around him, he wants to remember what it felt like to be living in this environment. His grandma lived through multiple historical events that he wishes he could have learned more about before she passed away.

Information needs He needs a way to document his experiences and emotions during this time.

Interactions He wants to be able to tell his kids about his experiences when all of this is a historical event someday.

Outcomes He is able to save and document his experiences, opinions, and emotions in a way that his kids will be able to easily access them someday.



Audience A college junior who just started going through a very hard time in his life.

Motivations He is unsure how he will be able to cope with this. He wants support to help him get through a harsh time.

Context He is starting a hard time in his life that he knows will last for a while. He is scared and sad and is unsure how he will be able to cope with the challenges that lie ahead.

Information needs He wants information and support from people who truly understand what he is going through, people that have overcome similar obstacles.

Interactions He is able to connect with others who have overcome similar obstacles. They provide support and understanding for him in his time of need.

Outcomes He feels better and more supported through a community of people who truly understand what he is going through as he moves forward in the overcoming the obstacles in his life that lie ahead.

Team Agreement

Self-Assessments & Assignments

Team Member	Expertise	Experience	Superpowers	Gaps	Assigned
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Chris	Startup / company infrastructure and process. Knowledge of human dynamics and psychology. Strong programming knowledge, especially java basics. Teaching and explaining concepts. Thinking creatively and abstractly.	Teaching intro computer science. Building a startup from the ground up with a bootstrap approach. Reverse engineering gaming companies source code and implementing / extending the content of the game by writing code, building art assets, and dealing with game engine efficiency.	Finding the root cause and purpose of things. Having an intense care for the wellbeing of humanity and the future of our cultures and traditions.	Spelling (dyslexic) Natural language process in Computer Science Cybersecurity (online transactions)	Team management Mediating team agreement App development
Eduard	Writing, wireframing/Lucid Chart, some Photoshop, Git, React/JSX, Materialize framework, webapp security, network security basics, PostgreSQL, sqlite & T-SQL databases, Java	Worked for a Managed Service Provider, did random office administration work, tiny React webapp project, IT infrastructure	Connecting unrelated ideas, asking questions, listening actively, playing devil's advocate, being flexible with workload	Project management / leadership, pitching ideas	Wireframing, programming, writing copy App dev & database considerations
Joel	Sketch, videography (directing & editing), design, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, client-side web	The quintessential Informatics classes, work as the video production intern at AnswerDash.	Video production and the kind of morbid pessimism that makes me pretty decent at identifying potential pitfalls.	Programming	The final video, design

development, some Swift and Python, Jekyll, git.

Sanchya

Human
psychology, data
science,
Relational
databases/SQL
programming,
media
development,
writing stories,
user experience,
wireframing,
project
management,
knowledge of
human behavior

Informatics
classes, project
manager for
database project
with Microsoft,
psychology and
human behavior
classes, project
with Starbucks
that involved
documentation
review and
optimization tools

Creativity,
communication,
good
relationships with
professors and
mentors that can
help us, passion
for writing and
telling stories,
good at writing,

Programming
(not the best but
willing to get
better and learn!)
and presenting to
the class (I get
stage fright)

Helping with team management, generating ideas, working on design and user testing

User research & database considerations

Team-Level Tasks

- 1. User testing:
 - **a.** Each team member will do informal user interviews by asking friends, family, and associates about points of interest at any stage of the project (i.e. decide what to ask in group meetings)
 - **b.** Each team member will do informal user testing by showing friends, family, and associates wireframes and clickable prototypes at each significant deliverable point (first wireframe, each iteration, etc.)
- 2. Section deliverables:
 - **a.** Complete the section deliverables in a timely manner so we can work on more productive things.
- 3. Complete strategy brief February 1, 2017:
 - **a.** Each team member takes one or more of the five competitors we've identified and fills out their respective column on the expanded competitive matrix.
 - **b.** Each team member revises the storyboards they've already created to fulfill the feedback given by instructors.
 - **c.** Each team member revises any other work they were responsible for that had feedback from instructors
 - **d.** Each team member will summarize any findings in the User Research section
- 4. Complete design blueprint March 1, 2017:
 - **a.** Chris has done the beginnings of an app mock-up -- all of us will draw this out into a comprehensive blueprint
- 5. Complete pitch video March 8, 2017:

- a. Joel will lead this effort
- b. Others will assist as asked
- 6. Research technologies (i.e. existing open source projects, programming languages, frameworks):
 - a. Each of us will research possible technological solutions that we might have experience with (i.e., some of us have taken Mobile Dev -- they could look at mobile development frameworks. Others only have web experience -- they could look at responsive web app frameworks).

Team Management

- 1. Tools:
 - **a.** Shared Google Drive folder for Section Work, Assignments, lecture notes and meeting minutes
 - **b.** Github for code
 - **c.** Slack OR group text for communication
 - d. Google Hangouts for teleconferencing
- 2. Time:
 - a. Make the most of section time
 - **b.** Meet 1+ times weekly
 - **c.** Be available online to complete stuff if it is not done and the deadline is approaching

Team Agreement

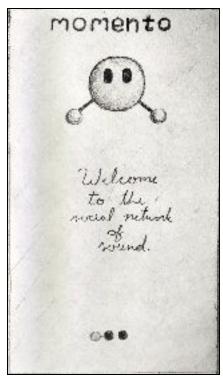
- 1. Responsibility
 - **a.** Come to lecture, or at least section on Fridays.
 - **b.** Give notice (IM, text, or otherwise) when missing meetings or class as soon as you can.
 - **c.** Do the work that you volunteer for or are assigned, and ask for help if you can't.
 - **d.** Voice any questions and concerns.
- 2. Reliance
 - **a.** Offer your help if you happen to be good at something & be willing to teach.
 - **b.** Expect to spend ~12 hours on the project outside of class.
 - i. If this is a 4 credit class then we should be spending ~ 12 (4 * 3) hours outside of class.
 - **c.** Check Slack and text messages daily.
 - **d.** Tuesdays are generally the most free, at 12:00pm 4:00pm.
- 3. Relationship
 - **a.** Be serious, but not too serious; leave room for conversation.
 - **b.** Encourage others.
- 4. Respect
 - a. Listen actively and ask questions.

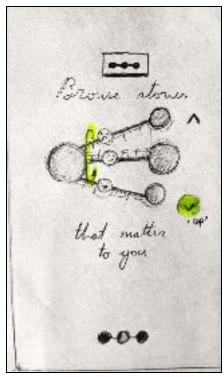
- **b.** Disagree calmly.
- **c.** In case of conflict or dysfunction, escalate logically. If one member is causing problems or two members have an interpersonal conflict, attempt to resolve issues one-on-one. If that doesn't work, come together and discuss the issue as a team in the open, so that other members can mediate the disagreement. If the issue is unmanageable, consult the TA/instructor for assistance.

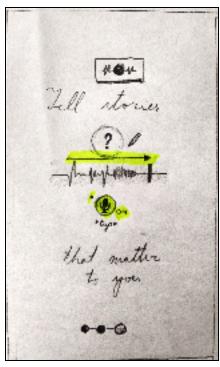
5. Reflection

- a. Discuss failures and triumphs; recognize what went well and what could improve
- **b.** Be amenable to change.

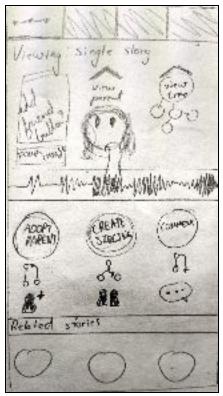
Wireframes Onboarding screens concept

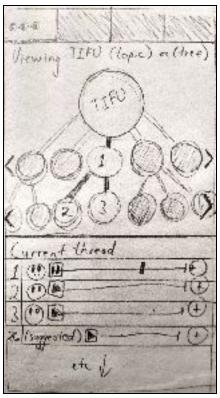


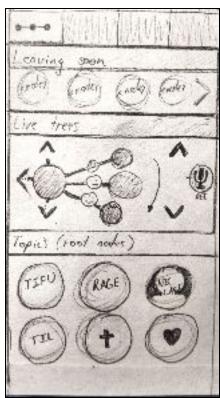


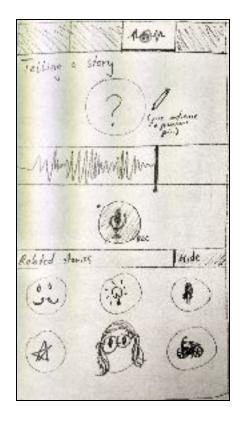


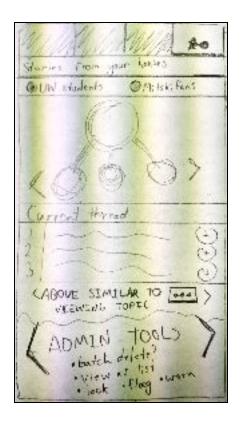
Four main tabs



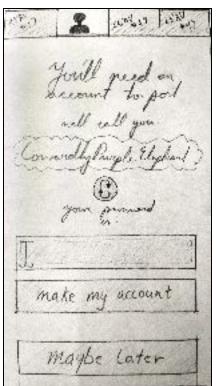




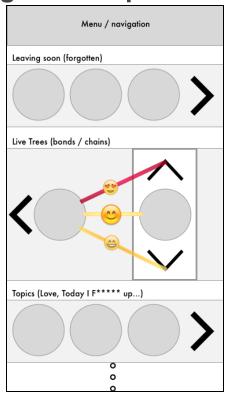


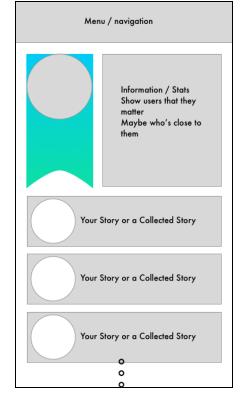


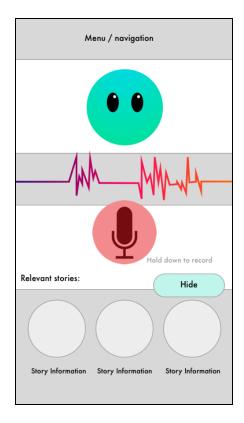


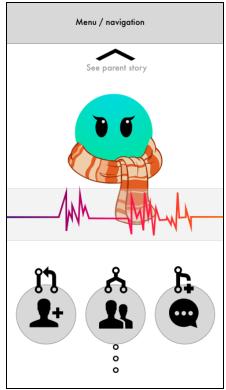


Design mockup









Moodboards

Platform considerations

Front-end

We deliberated over the platform of MomentO, settling on mobile as the optimum platform for the application, but then struggling to determine whether we should create a web application due to the time constraints of Capstone and our unanimous preexisting exposure to web development, with a plan to develop a mobile final product based on a web prototype. We lay out some front-end considerations below.

Security & user trust

The user's sense of security and trustworthiness is incredibly important. The walled garden of app stores make mobile applications appear more secure, as is the inherent "contained" nature of mobile applications. Most of us remember the horrifying experience of getting our first computer virus. Mobile apps at least don't *seem* to present the same threat to the user. However, the rapidly expanding mobile app development bubble floods the market with applications that, perhaps, users should not trust with their personal information.

The security between mobile and web applications appears equivalent, as both would rely on the same server-side technologies. The ease with which mobile devices are stolen or cracked¹⁴ is of no concern to the team in face of the size of the mobile market.

Availability

Mobile applications are readily available in the pockets and purses of their users, whereas web applications are concealed behind a web browser and often more seamlessly used via desktop or laptop. Responsive, mobile-friendly web apps can be taxing to get right.

With the neglect of their desktop platform (the Mac Pro, for example, hasn't been updated in 1,168 days, whereas its average refresh cycle was 449),¹⁵ Apple's actions indicate a hyperfocusing on the growing¹⁷ mobile market. Our team anticipates joining this market, rather than developing for a possibly decaying platform with a diminishing amount of users.

¹⁴ Kain, Eric. "The NSA Reportedly Has Total Access To The Apple iPhone." *Forbes.* 30 Dec 2013. https://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2013/12/30/the-nsa-reportedly-has-total-access-to-your-iphone/#48f c8c182ad1.

¹⁵ Savov, Vlad. "macOS is becoming legacy software." *The Verge.* 21 Dec 2016. http://www.theverge.com/2016/12/21/14037686/apple-macbook-macos-focus-mobile-features-ios.

¹⁶ "Buyer's Guide." *MacRumors*. 28 Feb 2017. https://buyersguide.macrumors.com/#Mac.

¹⁷ Clifford, Catherine. "By 2017, the App Market Will Be a \$77 Billion Industry (Infographic)." *Entrepreneur.* 26 August 2014. https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236832.

Scalability

In its early days, Java's devotees spoke highly of its object-orientation and the inherent scalability of this approach. However, JavaScript is capable of object-oriented programming as well, although this is not strictly mandated by the language. iOS' Swift is also incredibly object-oriented, though we have decided against iOS development due to our team's lack of experience with the platform.

Performance & usability

Mobile apps require installation, introducing a source of friction absent from web applications. On the other hand, much of the static data an app requires is downloaded upon installation, and once installed an app is easier to open than a web page. Further, native apps generally perform better than web or hybrid apps¹⁸ (essentially web apps in a native wrapper), although performance varies due to implementation decisions.

Mobile users may uninstall after repeated frustrations; it's important for developers to achieve great usability early. ¹⁹ In the event of bugs going unnoticed on our part, this is a downside. In contrast, web applications may lend themselves more easily to workarounds (switching browsers, disabling unresponsive scripts, using add-ons such as Reddit Enhancement Suite, etc.).

It is difficult to generalize about performance and usability here, but we feel the potential for better performance in a native app is something we should strive towards.

Ease of development

Due to our very limited resources, the ease of development for our platform of choice is a primary concern. Our widest shared programming experience, in descending order, is in Java, web technologies, and Android. Android boasts excellent documentation and a wealth of learning resources online, and its apps are written in a Java-like language. Although only one of us has taken a mobile development course, we are confident we can translate our web and Java skills to a sufficient level of proficiency in Android development to complete a minimal working prototype.

Native apps can make use of the standard UI of the platform. Meanwhile, although material design has taken hold on the web, there are many competing technologies to choose from, as well as associated frameworks that all have subtle differences. Developing for Android may alleviate some of the strain of UI implementation as well as the agony of choosing the right web up-and-comer. And although a good web app can be run from a modern browser across desktop and mobile platforms, this requires careful design and testing against a plethora of

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¹⁸ Abed, Robbie. "Hybrid Vs. Native Mobile Apps - The Answer is Clear." *Y Insights*. 30 Sept 2016. https://ymedialabs.com/hybrid-vs-native-mobile-apps-the-answer-is-clear/.
¹⁹ Ibid.

devices. We choose to focus instead on a single mobile platform and a smaller set of devices for simplicity.

In terms of presentation, we anticipate that demoing a native app on a smartphone may be more convincing to a stakeholder than demoing from a laptop or mobile browser. We could easily sideload our app onto an Android phone and present it without the added clunkiness of a laptop and the hassle of running a web server and client.

Conclusion

After extended deliberation on these issues, we put the choice of platform to a vote. We settled on a native Android app as our front-end platform primarily due to time constraints and our current technical abilities. Many successful companies create a website, Android app, iOS app and Windows Phone app for their product. Given plenty of time and resources, we might opt for the same approach.

Back-end

Integrity & availability

The ability to recover from a disaster requires a well-designed recovery plan. Designing such a plan is non-trivial and requires database-specific expertise; a flawed design can lead to data loss and/or unacceptable downtimes. Our team has existing knowledge of disaster recovery for Microsoft SQL Server databases, but it is unlikely we will use such a database for reasons discussed later in this section.

Meanwhile, cloud solutions are helping businesses become more robust against disaster.²⁰ Heroku, AWS, Azure, and GrapheneDB (a cloud-hosted graph database service) all provide disaster recovery solutions at free or paid tiers.

Confidentiality

We will not expose our users to the same level of risk as an organization that stores credit card numbers, addresses, driver's licenses, etc. However, according to our data model, we do intend to store email addresses, IPs, and password hashes which still constitute personally identifiable information. Emails and passwords are particularly attractive to attackers because users tend to re-use them across websites. Data breaches therefore remain a concern.

At the platform level, keeping software up-to-date helps mitigate the risk of data breach, but a software update to one piece of our application may necessitate changes to other pieces, easily making migration to a new version a major time-sink. Since cloud services take care of software updates for us, we can save effort and better protect our users at the same time.

²⁰ "Why Move to the Cloud? 10 Benefits of Cloud Computing. *Salesforce UK & Ireland Blog.* 17 Nov 2015. https://www.salesforce.com/uk/blog/2015/11/why-move-to-the-cloud-10-benefits-of-cloud-computing.html.

There is always a trade-off between convenience and security. Using SaaS makes development and maintenance more convenient for us and keeps our application more secure in some respects, but it does not eliminate all risks. Oversight, mismanagement, or malicious activity are risks we expose ourselves to by using a third-party. We choose to accept these risks.

Scalability

The ability to quickly scale up to volume requirements on-demand is one of the most touted benefits of software-as-a-service. Most popular SaaS providers also offer a free hobbyist or student tier. Should our project mature to a level that demands it in the future, being able to use a paid tier of a platform we developed on for free is a very compelling convenience.

Ease of development

Some of us have already used cloud services to deploy simple applications, e.g. Heroku, with relative ease and at no cost. Because server administration is nuanced and time-intensive, using such a service would save us effort on configuration, maintenance and deployment. In addition, AWS and Heroku can be integrated with GitHub to streamline collaborative development.

Choice of database

The considerations discussed above led us to choose a cloud hosting solution. However, our choice of a specific provider is predicated on the kind of database they support. Two obvious options came to mind: relational databases, which have broad applications and which we have experience working with, and graph databases, which we are unfamiliar with but which have a narrower use that piqued our interest.

In a relational database, information is stored as rows and columns within tables. Data is related using keys, and related data can be retrieved from tables.²¹ Relational databases are built on relational theory which has been widely used successfully in databases to reduce redundancy and anomalies and increase efficiency. Relational databases are built on a solid theory that has proven to work well for decades. However, the normalization process often reduces speed, is constrictive and may not be ideal in when dealing with potentially large volumes of highly-interconnected data (which necessitates expensive JOIN operations). Schemas can be relatively cumbersome to change.

In contrast, a graph database stores, maps and queries relationships using a graph data structure containing nodes and edges.²² It performs best in tasks that involve highly interconnected data and deep traversals, such as finding friends-of-friends, making

²¹ https://docs.oracle.com/javase/tutorial/jdbc/overview/database.html

²² http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/graph-database

recommendations, etc. and may support dynamic schema. As a result, it is well-suited to social networking scenarios.

Conclusion

A graph database seems the best fit for the nature of our project because we anticipate a need to manage deep and highly interconnected data items as a consequence of our app design. A cursory look at open-source offerings revealed that Neo4j is currently the most popular graph database and can be used at a free tier with Heroku. However, we're not sure how straightforward it will be to become sufficiently proficient with this back-end in our remaining time. We intend to target this platform for our prototypes, but are ready to fall back to the more familiar PostgreSQL or similar on Heroku should the difficulty become insurmountable.

Epics & stories

Epic 1: Account creation & management

- 1. As a privacy-aware user, I want to control privacy settings for my account so I can decide who gets to know things about me.
- 2. As a lurker, I want to create an account easily so I can begin to participate.
- 3. As a creative user, I want to customize my profile so others can see how I express myself.
- 4. As an infrequent user, I want to add an email address so I can recover my account when I forget my credentials.

Epic 2: Story browsing

- 1. As a user, I want to consume stories that I identify with so I can find meaning in my own life.
- 2. As a frequent user, I want to view stories by topic so I can look at only the content that interests me thematically.
- 3. As an avid user, I want to review my browsing history so I can return to my favorite stories.
- 4. As a new user, I want to see what's popular so I don't have to go digging for content.
- 5. As a user, I can see what stories connect to mine visually.
- 6. As a user, I can visually see the flow of how one story leads to another within topics.

Epic 3: Story creation & management

1. As a private user, I want to specify who can see particular stories I submit so I can't be identified by strangers.

- 2. As a privacy-aware user, I want to specify how long my stories will be available so that my data isn't stored indefinitely.
- 3. As a user, I want to see stories I've submitted in the past so I can reflect on the events of my life.
- 4. As a user, I want to modify and delete stories I've submitted.
- 5. As a creative user, I want to accept compensation (tokens or real money) for my work so I can feel my valuable time is appreciated.

Epic 4: Community interaction

- 1. As a user, I want to see stories I've submitted in the past so I can see how others have reacted to them.
- 2. As a creative user, I want to respond to submissions so I can experience human interaction.
- 3. As an open user, I want to join houses so I can bond with like-minded individuals around shared interests.
- 4. As a leader, I want to flag or delete abusive posts in my house so I can make my house a better community.
- 5. As a private user, I want to control the visibility of my relationships so I leave a smaller digital footprint.
- 6. As a user, I want to form houses so I can share stories with a curated audience.
- 7. As a frequent user, I want to block abusive users so I can avoid harassment.
- 8. As an avid user, I want to add friends so I can keep in touch with users I get along with.
- 9. As an avid user, I want to be able to follow/ keep track of connections developed between stories within topics.

Prototype

We refined our wireframe to include more granular levels of detail and clear coherence between the implied feature set and the actual abilities (buttons, etc.) detailed in the wireframe. We used the results of our user survey to inform some of our decisions at this step. We used heuristic analysis and also performed informal usability tests to determine whether there were serious usability issues.

Our live prototype can be found here: https://invis.io/KWAQNQ29F

User considerations

Assumptions

1. The current iteration of our wireframe pays no special attention to blindness, deafness, or muteness, and as such assumes our users don't have these conditions. We also

assume users will prefer an aural-visual medium to reading stories in text format. We are discussing the feasibility of text-to-speech and transcription features that may serve to improve the accessibility and user experience of our application.

- 2. Users will find our privacy policy acceptable and will be willing to share the data addressed therein (such as their voice and email address) with us as well as other users.
- 3. Users must be capable of manipulating a touchscreen.
- 4. Users must have some experience with mobile apps and UI elements.
- 5. Users must have an internet-capable device with the necessary hardware and software features (e.g. a graphical interface, a microphone)

Research

Interviews

In unstructured interviews with several post-college working people, we found that people feel lonely after they leave work, especially when living alone.

One particular case was a young man living in Los Angeles. Chris spoke to him over Xbox Live asking him about his life. He made the point that after college, there is a sudden decrease in the number of friends one has and the number of available friends. For him, much of his leisure time is spent playing video games online with other people so he can hear their voices and connect with them. He keeps in touch with many of his friends this way.

Another graduate, one who had recently broken up with his girlfriend, brought up how unfulfilling and lonely his time off work felt. He brought up how it was hard to meet people and he wished that he had access to some of the facilities at the university so he could meet people of similar interests.

Another stakeholder we interviewed extensively is currently pursuing a master's degree at the university. He spends a lot of time reading stories online, sometime reading up to a million words in one day. Some of the desires he holds are to be able to find meaningful and related content when a story ends in an unfulfilling manner. He would also like to publish his own creative stories. One possibility that excited him is the prospect of making money from his creativity.

Survey

In response to feedback from our instructors, we revisited why we were asking the questions in our survey, whether they could be asked in a better way, and whether they were appropriate. We have made additions in <u>green</u> and deletions in <u>red</u>. Also, we have included justification for each question we are asking.

We distributed the survey as a link to a Google Form. We posted the link to the /r/udub and /r/seattle subreddits, and the UW class of 2017 Facebook page. Our results follow the question lists.

Qualitative questions

Question Justification

- A social medium is a website or application that enables users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.²³ What Which is/are your favorite social platform medium(s), if any? Why?
- 1. Our project has pivoted to a social medium wherein the content is audio-based. We want to see what people value across the wide range of social media offerings, and what makes someone choose one social medium above all others. Social platform was not the right terminology in this question. We changed the phrase to "social medium" and added a definition so that all respondents know what we are asking about.
- 2. An online community is a virtual community whose members interact with each other primarily via the Internet, and may or may not know each other in person. ²⁴ Do you belong to any online communities? If so, please describe them, which are your favorites?
- 2. This question is similar to the one before it, except that online communities are distinct from social networks, most significantly in the fact that online community members interact "primarily via the Internet." We are wondering whether our product has more appeal as something shared typically between friends or strangers on the Internet. If there is a correlation between respondents who answer in the affirmative to questions about sharing/consuming stories, and those who tend to be part of online communities, it helps validate our assumption that our users will expect to interact with strangers and use pseudo-anonymous user handles rather than real-life names. We decided to ask for the respondents' favorites rather than a description to reduce mental load. Also, if we ask for favorites rather than a "yes" or "no," we can

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²³ https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/social_media

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online community

follow-up and investigate these online communities.

- 3. A story is an account of fictional or real people or events. 25 A story can be fictitious, biographical, motivational, depressing, etc. What kinds of stories do you read, listen to, or watch online, if any? I.e. news stories, personal/biographical stories, fictional/fictitious stories, motivational, depressing, etc.
- 3. We intend for our users to share stories. We want to figure out what kind of stories might entice people to try our app. This would inform how we design the story feeds on the landing page / main screen of our application. We added a definition to make it clear what we are talking about ("story" can be vague) and edited the question slightly for readability and redundancy.
- 4. If you read, listen to, or watch stories online, why?
- 4. We speculate that deep down, people view stories to maintain a sense of culture and feel connected to others. There are other possibly valid competing explanations, such as pure entertainment. This may dictate the tone we use within the app.
- 5. Do you share stories about yourself or those close to you online? Why or why not?
- 5. We are testing the validity of our assumption that people will share stories about themselves. The members of our team are not very avid social media users, and we tend to be reticent about putting things online for various reasons. We expect that we are not representative of our user base.
- 6. Do you feel that it is easy to make new friendships online? Why or why not?
- 6. We want to promote the ability to form friendships. We expect that enabling users to form communities/friends lists will cause them to return to the app. If we know where other services have failed them, we might be able to improve upon our competition.
- 7. What types of activities make you feel closer with friends or strangers?
- 7. We expect that community-building will be an important feature of our app. We want to see if we can more concretely identify what kinds of activities we should support. Is it it enough to merely allow people to add friends and form groups? Or should we aim to support more

²⁵ http://www.dictionary.com/browse/story

advanced or nuanced functionality based on this question?

8. If or when you feel lonely, what do you do?

8. We added this question because we need to know what people tend to do when they are lonely. Because we envision some of our personas to be lonely and seeking human connection, it's important that we test whether consuming stories online is an activity that people find helpful when they are lonely. This will help us understand whether that use case is realistic. Also, we say "if or when" to avoid accusing the respondent of being lonely, which may feel insulting.

Quantitative/categorical questions

Question	Justification
1. What is your age? a. <text input=""></text>	 In previous documents, we had indicated that we are targeting a college-aged demographic. We would like to know if our intended features fall in line with the preferences of this age group. We may give more consideration to the concerns of respondents close to our intended age group than those who are very far away from it.
 2. What is your gender? a. Male b. Female c. Prefer not to say d. Other <text input=""></text> 	2. Online platforms can be very skewed towards one gender or another. Examples: Reddit, Pinterest, Tumblr. We would like to know the gender of the respondent so we can see how their responses correlate to our own beliefs about the project, and whether our stated values fall more in line with one gender or another. We see no reason to discourage certain genders from participating in our application, and don't want to do so inadvertently. One (worst-case) reason for this

is that male-dominated websites can become misogynistic echo-chambers; Reddit was overrun with misogynistic commentary during the Ellen Pao controversy.

We realize this question can be invasive/personal, but like all other questions in our survey it is not required. A respondent can skip it if it makes them uncomfortable.

- 3. How many friends would you say you know strictly offline? (Estimate)
 - a. <u>0</u>
 - b. 1-9
 - c. 10-19
 - d. <u>20-29</u>
 - e. <u>30-39</u>
 - f. <u>40-49</u>
 - g. <u>50-59</u>
 - h. 60+

3. Questions 3 & 4 were removed in favor of quantitative question 5.

- 4. How many friends would you say you know strictly online? (Estimate)
 - a. 0
 - b. <u>1-9</u>
 - c. 10-19
 - d. 20-29
 - e. 30-39
 - f. 40-49
 - g. <u>50-59</u>
 - h. <u>60+</u>

4. Questions 3 & 4 were removed in favor of quantitative question 5.

- 5. <u>Do you consider anyone you know strictly online</u> (not in-person) a friend?
 - a. Yes
 - b. <u>No</u>
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Other... <text input>

5. We decided to replace the questions about how many friends the respondent has with this one. Asking/answering how many friends one has is always uncomfortable. Often, people don't even keep track of how many friends they have. Phrasing the question this way gets at the heart of what we want to learn (do people still generally consider those they haven't met IRL

their friends?) and reduces discomfort of the respondent.

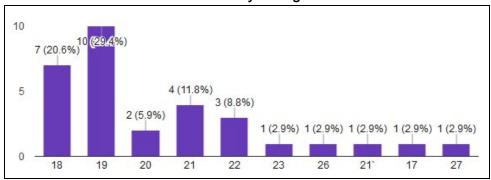
- 6. When given the choice, do you prefer to use your name or an alias to identify yourself online?
 - a. I prefer to use my name to identify myself online
 - I prefer to use my name or an alias to identify myself online depending on the situation
 - c. I prefer to use an alias to identify myself online
- 6. Google experienced backlash when it attempted to coerce users into linking a Google+ account to their YouTube username. Facebook discourages using fictitious names, which some users find irritating. We ask this question because we wonder if our users will be reluctant to use their real-life names.
- 7. How would you rate the difficulty of coming up with a username when registering an account online?
 - a. <1-5 scale, very difficult to very easy>
- 7. As a group, we discussed the friction associated with account signup. Some sites, e.g. Quora, make this process irritating they require users to sign up before viewing more than one question. Others require a user's email address or ask them to come up with a unique username, or to use their real-life names. In our wireframes, we depicted a feature that would randomly generate a memorable, available pseudo-anonymous handle, similar to services like Xbox Live, Google Docs, and some image hosts. We ask this question because we want to know whether registering a username is a pain point for our users.
- 8. How often do you find others' stories to be useful in reflecting on your own life?
 - a. <1-5 scale, virtually never to virtually always>
- 8. We believe our application will encourage self-reflection, but this is contingent on how valuable users find stories in reflecting on their own lives.
- 9. <u>In general, how important would you rate being socially validated/socially accepted?</u>
- 9. We removed this question because we found it to be highly subjective and difficult to respond to, as well as to analyze. Many people say they don't care what others think, and that they value individualism above all, when in reality psychology suggests that most everyone needs to be socially accepted and validated on some

level. We're not sure if this question provides any value for us; we anticipate that our project would not change significantly based on responses to this question unless respondents overwhelmingly claimed social validation was unimportant, which seems unlikely.

- 10. How often do you experience feelings of loneliness?
 - a. <1-5 scale, virtually never to virtually always>
- 10. Answers to this question might give us a rough estimate of what proportion of people are lonely in UW and Seattle communities. We can compare this with peer reviewed research and determine whether our "lonely" persona is a realistic persona.

Results

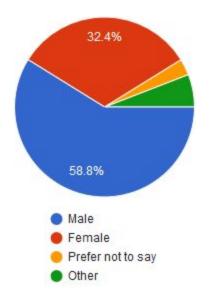
1. What is your age?



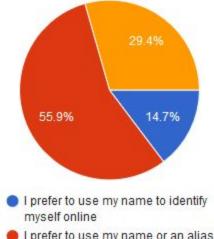
Our survey results gave us some very valuable insights to work with as we move forward in the design and implementation of our product. Our survey generated 34 responses total, although not each respondent completed all questions. The average age of our respondents was 22, though we had the highest amount of responses from individuals who were 19. These ages are within the age range we had aimed for our target audience to be. Slightly more than half of the people (56.3%) that completed our survey were male.

2. What is your gender?

From the first question asking about name aliases, the majority of people (53.1%) preferred using a name or alias online depending on the situation. This gives us some insight on how much anonymity we should introduce into this application and if people are willing to use their real names.



3. When given the choice, do you prefer to use your name or an alias to identify yourself online?



- I prefer to use my name or an alias to identify myself online depending on
- I prefer to use an alias to identify myself online

the situation

There was variation in our responses for the next question regarding the difficulty of coming up with a username when registering an account online, with the highest amount of responses indicating it was relatively easy (answering 1 or 2 on a scale of 1-5) and the second highest amount of responses indicating the other end of the spectrum saying it can be somewhat difficult (4 on a 1-5 scale). From these responses of both this question and the one before, we can consider the best way to have people represent their identity. Is it better for complete anonymity or do people want to be connected with their real name when they go through the process of sharing stories? These results suggest that the situation plays a major role in this decision. We don't want to introduce a pain point into the application.

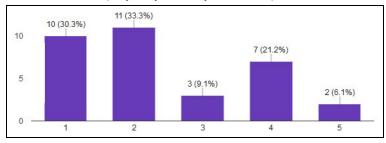
About half of our responses (a 54.5% majority) indicated that they do not consider anyone strictly online a friend. This is interesting to know because our application involves social dynamics and in order to make our application successful, we need to understand these social dynamics and how people view others on the internet. We aim to foster connections between people. The type of connection and the depth of the connection is influenced by how people view each other online.

In the next question, we found that the a large amount of our applicants found the stories of other people reflecting on their own lives about half the time. However, the majority were towards the other half of the spectrum, suggesting that most people connect and reflect through telling stories often. We also found that the majority of our participants experience feelings of loneliness often.

The next set of questions were short answer responses. From the first question, we learned about what social media platforms people seemed to like to use the most and why. People were varied in their responses greatly but many of the popular social media platforms came up such as Facebook, Reddit, Twitter, SnapChat, and Instagram.

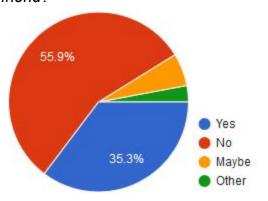
4. How would you rate the difficulty of coming up with a username when registering an account online?

(very easy = 1; very difficult = 5)



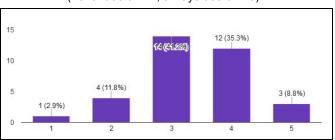
It seemed like people used each one for different reasons, some for receiving/posting information (Reddit) and others for staying in touch (Facebook). Most are used to stay connected to family and friends through snippets of information. Our application would focus on the social aspects more in the realm of Reddit, focusing on sharing and receiving information (but for our purposes, stories). For the next question involving participation in online communities, many of our participants listed Reddit as online communities they were part of, many also listed a few online gaming communities.

5. Do you consider anyone you know strictly online (not in-person) a friend?



6. How often do you find others' stories to be useful in reflecting on your own life?

(never useful = 1; always useful = 5)

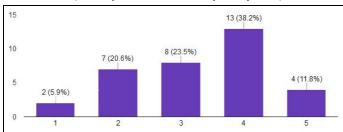


The next short answer question involved the types of stories people like to listen to/read. There was a large variation of responses to this question depending on people's tastes, including non-fiction, news, fantasy, science-fiction, etc. One type we noticed cropping up in the majority of responses was news/Reddit. People like to keep in touch with what is occurring in the world. This is valuable information for us in how we may go about inspiring people to write stories to share, maybe through featured topics such as important ongoing events.

The next short answer question involved the purpose behind why people read or listen to stories, there was a variety of responses to this question as well. Some people brought up stories as a sort of entertainment for their boredom, others brought up keeping up to date with world events as well as gaining new knowledge. One response indicated the innate human desires to enjoy stories, which we really connected with (one of the reasons we decided to create this application). Our application will need to fulfill the needs of people with different reasons for wanting to listen to/read stories. Keeping up with current events is a theme that has cropped up again frequently.

7. How often do you experience feelings of loneliness?





Our next question asked whether or not people shared stories about themselves to people close to them online. Unfortunately, significant amount of responses returned a "no" response to this question. This really gives us something to think about, as we will need to find ways to inspire people to share their stories online with those they are close to online, as that is one of the core purposes of our product.

The next question involving the ease of making friendships online returned a divided response both ways. About half the people said yes and half the people said no. This question has to do with perspective and may likely also be greatly influenced by people's differing personalities. Our application will aim to accommodate both extroverts and introverts.

The last question, involving what activities bring people closer together, also got a variety of responses depending on people's tastes. One activity that popped up a lot was some sort of competitive activity such as gaming (which was very popular in our responses). It is possible we need to consider introducing some sort of competitive aspect into our application as well. Other responses included having meaningful discussions with people over topics they connect on, which fits exactly into the realm of what we plan to do with our project.

The results we received were very insightful and gave us a lot to think about. We, however, realize that these results cannot apply to everyone especially since we received responses from people who use Reddit and Facebook (where this survey was posted) and applies to a certain demographic - people that most likely use the internet/social media frequently.

Personas

The exercise of creating personas illuminated several pain points for us that we glossed over when we first conceived our app.

Some users go to websites without expecting to find anything in particular except entertainment. For example, it's easy to think of a user subscribing to certain content they like when we have become accustomed to using a website. It makes our goal easier to think about if we take for granted that the user knows what they want. However, the vast majority of users are actually lurkers, who might consume content incidentally.

In a similar vein, a newcomer to a website has no expectations as to the website's purpose or value. This was doubly reinforced when we could all recall an experience of seeing a website for the first time and being confused as to what it was all about. This made it clear that we should curate content in an understandable form so the home screen gives a clear indication of our platform's value/purpose.

One of our personas, Robert Winstead, was a user we characterized as looking for stories about "loneliness" and "boredom" on a whim. In reflecting on him, we wondered whether lonely individuals explicitly go online with the goal of making friends or learning how to make friends, or whether making friends was incidental to participating in an online community. It caused us to consider that this persona wasn't really a realistic user of our app, and that maybe we had shoehorned in a message of finding inspiration to overcome loneliness. It made us think more deeply about providing the tools to make two-way relationships in our platform (namely, "houses") rather than expecting users to overcome the very human need for validation and belonging by the one-way consumption of a story.

Ryan Wright taught us another lesson. His story was a bit whimsical, but in it was a very realistic desire to be compensated in some way for the time he spent writing online. As a result, we thought about what it is that compels a poster to post a comment or a writer to write a story. Many content contributors are undoubtedly driven by an internal motivation, but what about external motivation?

A token economy is a well-known method of operant conditioning for reinforcing "good" behavior. All of us can attest that it feels good when someone likes our picture, reblogs our status, upvotes our comment, tosses a few cryptocoins our way, gilds our post (Redditors will edit their posts to add "thanks for the gold!" as a matter of custom), etc. With likes, points, or reblogs, maybe the only things we can buy are influence online. But the latter two are particularly impactful because someone thought our words were worth *real money*, even if only a few cents or a dollar. We feel that it's a contentious issue, but that there is a place in our app for small monetary exchanges as signs of appreciation and validation.