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COSC345 Assignment 1

Gossip - Anonymous Chat Room App

What you are going to build:

Our project is an Anonymous Chat Room App called Gossip. Gossip is a real-time chat room Android application where the user can chat anonymously within their group of friends and hide it from a third party's curious eyes. While there are dozens of messaging applications available, Gossip focuses on the user's anonymity. The users will be required to create an account so that they can have a way to authenticate the person they are talking to. However, after a chat room is created, all users' identities will be hidden and only their chat bubbles appear in the chat. They can also clear their chat log as well as being able to add/discover new people. Users can gossip to their heart's content without their secrets being revealed with our Gossip.

Goals:

1. A chat room that functions for one-on-one and group conversations - Not a message app
2. Chat room is able to host account registration and record contacts with authentication
3. Chat room is able to hold multiple chats and conversations simultaneously.
4. User can adjust level of anonymity for each chat and delete the chat as they wish

Who your anarchists are:

Our team consists of three members: Simon, Minh and Dream.

Simon can program in Java, C, and some basic python, javascript, C++, and HTML. Has some backend and a little bit of frontend experience. He will mainly be working in the backend for this software.

Minh can program in Java, C, and HTML. He has had some backend experience and will work as a backend for this software.

Dream can program in Java, C, and some basic HTML, CSS and javascript. She has graphic design knowledge and will, therefore, be working in the front end /user interface of this software.

How you are going to build it:

We will be building an application for Android operating systems that can be used with any compatible android devices. The main application will be built with Android Studio and the programming language used will be Kotlin. We will be using Google Firebase service for backend which provides essential requirements for our applications e.g. Authentication, Real time database, Cloud messaging etc.

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How long it will take to build:

Estimated time and tasks we intended to complete during each state of development:

Prototyping (2 Weeks)

1. Chat room
 - a. User shall be able to communicate one-on-one with other user
 - b. User shall be able to communicate with multiple users (group chat)
2. Anonymity
 - a. User shall be able to choose between three levels of anonymity for each chat group:
 - i. no anonymous (show usernames),
 - ii. half anonymous (replace usernames with randomly assigned colour of chat bubble), and
 - iii. all anonymous (everyone with same chat bubble and no username)

Alpha (4-6 Weeks)

1. Authentication system
 - a. User shall be able to register an account with email, social media account
 - b. User shall be able to Log in with registered account to use the messaging service
2. Contact list
 - a. User shall be able to add friend, delete friend
 - b. User shall be able to block someone from contact list
 - c. User shall be able to invite people from contact list into a group chat
3. Push Notifications
4. User Interface

Beta (8 Weeks)

1. Adding Additional features (if time permits)
 - a. Multimedia File Sharing
 - b. Contact importing
 - c. Self-destructing messages/ on-schedule messages
2. Stakeholder and Feedback
3. Testing and Debugging
4. Application shall be ready to publish

What the establishment already has that your app will do:

The most similar establishment that may make you mistake Gossip for is Rumr, an anonymous message app. Rumr also establishes the idea of making anonymous chat by replacing members' names with assigned colour in a group chat. However, the app was last updated in 2014 and we cannot find them in the app store for download. Therefore, we can assume we are creating something similar to it and hopefully better as well.

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Other establishments that are similar can be messaging apps such as Facebook's messenger, Snapchat, text messaging, and more. These establishments provide us with a view of basic requirements for a chat room.

How your app differs:

Gossip's key feature is chatting with friends with their names being anonymous which do not exist in popular messaging apps such as Messenger or WhatsApp. We are looking into the idea of users controlling their own level of anonymity, from hiding names to colour bubble chat or just plain chatting bubbles.

Gossip's second key feature is deletion of chat, which is similar to Snapchat. We want to go a step further and add an option for users to be able to set up automatic deletion of chat to their liking.

For further improvement of the app, our ambition for Gossip also includes some extra features such as scheduled message, ability to share images and import contact, and allow user to find and connect anonymously with strangers. Scheduled message is a function for users to set the time when they want their message to be sent, such as an hour later, which we have not seen in other messaging app. The ability to share images and import contact is our vision to improve Gossip to be more than just a chat room and become a full-fledged messaging app.

Who you are going to irritate by building it, and why they will be irritated:

A great part of the idea of Gossip relates to the anarchist software. With the idea of Gossip, we want to irritate the people who want to look at users' messages/data. These could be your nosy parents and friends who constantly go on your phone and look at your messages. They will be irritated because they won't know who their relatives are talking to in the chat.

In addition, the talking subject of the chat is also the target of irritation in our anarchist project. In particular, when the group chat anonymously talking behind someone else's back, there is no way to accurately track down who started it. Or perhaps, user want to plan a big prank onto someone with discussions on Gossip, the lucky target will be irritable annoyed when they can't find out the mastermind of the prank.