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NightWalk

a place to connect with friends to feel safe no matter where no matter what time

Introduction

We live in a world where personal safety is not guaranteed, especially for women who need to navigate dark, empty streets when walking home. I have heard hundreds of stories through newspaper articles and the media, but also through people I know, about women walking home, who were harassed. For many, including me, walking home at night is not as safe as you hope. It poses a very realistic fear.

For the Tech Basics II Project, I decided to build on my Tech Basics I submission – NightWalk.

My initial idea was simple: I wanted to create an app that could benefit the people around me.

I wanted to take what I knew my friends and I would use when one of us would walk home at night and include it into the app. NightWalk acts as a digital companion, bringing together safety features to ensure a more secure-feeling walk home.

The App - Structure and Additions

In my app, I wanted to combine several features I think are necessary to feel safe and make these features easily accessible.

When you open the GUI window you are welcomed to the app and see a short one-sentence description of the purpose of the app. Once you click on the Button to ‘feel safe together’, you get to the second page, which allows the user to type in all of the crucial information about themselves. My thought behind this is to make it easier to identify the user in case anything serious happens and their family or friends can’t get in touch with them. The third page is dedicated to appointing one to three emergency contacts, who are all contacted when using some of the Action Buttons on the next page. You don’t have to contact several people individually but can contact up to three people at once, which makes it easier, in case any of the people you want to contact are not available right at

that moment. I intend for these pages to be filled out before a night out so that the user can best focus on the main functions of the app and not be left to put in information in case of an emergency. That is why I decided not to change too much on these three pages from my Tech Basics I submission because I think they work the way they are. But there is one prominent thing I did change, which is to add a SOS Button to the second and third pages. Adding this Button there allows users to quickly contact the police in case they haven't filled out these pages before and want to contact 911 immediately. When an emergency happens, you want to be able to contact them with the click of a single Button and not have to click through several pages before you get there. The Buttons on the fourth-page lead to different actions the user can take. The thought behind most of these Buttons is to make the user feel safer, even when there is not a real emergency happening at the moment. When pressing the 'I am on my way home NOW' Button, an automatic message, containing the user's location and a short text message, is sent to the appointed emergency contacts. The Voice Message Button should lead the user to be able to record a voice message to be automatically sent to their appointed contacts if a certain time limit is reached. I like to do this to create the illusion of actually talking to someone to feel safer when most of my friends are asleep or do not answer.

A new addition to my app is the 'Chatbot' Button. The idea behind it is to be able to give you a sense of companionship and you do not have to make these decisions alone but are asked what you want to do. It asks you if you are in danger and gives you different answer options. Even though it is not a real person, it might make you feel less alone, because you get an immediate response to what you are texting, which can give you a sense of security as well.

Then there is the option of calling the 'Heimwegtelefon' and I added a telephone line sound to this page. This is a service you can call if you feel uncomfortable on your way home. A volunteer will pick up and talk to you until you have reached your destination.

And lastly the SOS Button. On this page, I also included a telephone line and 911 sound. I placed this Button at the same spot on every page to make it easily accessible, because I think it is the most important Button in my app.

Generally to me, it was very important to keep the app rather simple and not have too many functions to work with. If there are too many options and an emergency occurs, the user will be confused about what to press and how to navigate the app. I kept the options to what I and my friends, through personal experience, would use on our walks home.

Design

I changed the design from my first submission and decided to keep it simple because I do not think it should be the main focus of the app. I settled for light and bright colors because most often you feel unsafe on your walk home at night when it is probably dark outside.

On pages two to four, you can see a small icon, that can be a help in navigating the app, because it resembles what the pages are intended to do.

I think it is very important to keep the design simple because you do not want the user to be confused or lost on where to click.

Limitations

When changing some things in the app, I ran into a limitation, when I wanted to implement the SOS Button on every page. I tried several different solutions that I could come up with, but somehow it did not work or it did place the Button but deleted other pages. That is why I ultimately decided to ask ChatGPT where to place my code to be able to see the SOS Button on all the pages, which you can see in line 39 to line 45. It is not the code itself, that I did not know how to write, but I struggled with where to place it in my existing code.

Other than that I have used no additional sources apart from the code we have covered in class.

Other foreseeable limitations include some of the action pages, for example, the Voice Message page, since I do not have the know-how on how to implement these kinds of pages yet.