

# **Project Proposal: Caricature**

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## **Themes/topics and the goal of this game**

There are two major themes/topics I plan to explore through my game website. The first theme looks into the topic of stereotypes and how we perceive people based on some vague written bios. I've found that when I am given information about someone I haven't met before, I always try to paint a portrait of them in my head. Even if the information given is vague or not related to their appearance, my mind will still use whatever stereotypes or similar characters I can think of to make something up. Through this project, I want to know what stereotypes other people rely on to create those portraits in their mind when they are given just the bare minimum information. This curiosity came from my recent use of apps that try to connect you to similar people that could be potential friends. Specifically, a lot of dating apps or just general apps to make friends boast that their algorithm will find you the perfect match even though, in most cases, it simplifies the process of matching you with similar, and always vague, interests. I want to use this idea to create a mini game where you can see how others perceive you when your entire personality and appearance is reduced to a few words on a screen. The second theme explores how games or applications will purposefully skew their data in order to make the results more entertaining so they can get more attention. In this game, the system will purposefully exclude one or two portions of what the user submitted in order to ensure a different portrait every time that bio is used. This will end up feeding the game more content for people to look at and laugh at how the portrait isn't accurate. So the end goal of the game is to see how people interpret the limited information given to them and to see if skewing the results really makes a game more entertaining.

## **Final vision and audience**

The final goal of my project would be to create an online game that uses crowdsourcing to remain fresh and fun for a long time. The concept of this game surrounds the need of a constant stream of new bios for people to try describing or drawing. So the ideal scenario would be that the game is played casually to have some fun and entertain yourself wherever you are. As for the audience, I don't have any specific group in mind because I would imagine this to be a project that anyone can play anywhere. As I mentioned before, this project is meant to be fun and casual so I don't want to restrict it to a small group. The game becomes more fun when there are more bios created so having the game be open to anyone allows the game to flourish and be

even more fun. I also think the game would be more fun when a wider range of people are involved. Having different races, genders and personalities involved would make it harder to play as everyone has stereotypes ingrained in our heads whether we want to admit it or not. Pushing people to be more open minded when playing makes the game more interesting and gives all the players a more fun and entertaining experience.

### **Medium(s) used to create this project**

I intend to use Javascript, HTML and css to create this project. The reason I intend on using them is because I imagine this project being a website and they are a programming language I know best. I also wanted this project to be a website so it can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. The goal of the game is to reach as many people as possible so taking away unnecessary downloads or wait times is ideal. I also think this idea is very design oriented with little programming outside of creating a form and having a program that allows the user to draw online. I'm well versed in HTML and CSS now so designing with those languages will make me more comfortable and give me more time to focus on the harder aspects of the website, namely the drawing program.

### **Collecting data using the game**

My data can be split into two different categories; the submitted bios created by users and the portraits created by the players. The bios will be made up of many questions that dive into the players appearance and personality. Questions like "what's your gender?" or "what's your biggest interest?" will be asked so the player can get a better idea of the bio they're drawing. The second type of data collected is the portraits made after playing the game. This data will be made up of images the players to upload or draw on the site that depict a portrait of what they think the user who submitted the bio looks like. I want to be as inclusive as possible so the final product should have multiple ways of submitting the portraits. However, the data given to the player for the portrait will be misleading. This data will be altered so that portions of the original bio will not be available for the player making the portrait. More specifically, portions of the information related to their physical appearance will be taken leaving the player with the vague personality information. This will make the task harder for those playing the game and give a more diverse set of results even when this specific bio is used more than once.

## **The planned algorithms**

The game will be split in 3 sections, the first will be a form for the user to submit their bio and maybe a picture of themselves so that they can have their bio be a part of the game. This portion will be a basic html form that will ask the user specific info about themselves and submit that data to a JSON file. The bio data will include some basic physical information, like gender/body type/hair color, and some more vague personality questions. It will include a combination of answers where the user can type their it out and drop down menus that ask more specific questions with limited answers. The second part is the game itself is where the user will be provided information from a randomly selected bio and asked to describe or draw it. The catch of the game is that the bios given to those playing the game will be incomplete. The system will purposefully exclude some of the physical information the creator of the bio submitted in order to force the player to make parts of the portrait up and work with the info they were given. The change in info provided will ensure a slightly different portrait every time that specific bio is used. Then the portraits created will be saved in another JSON file with only the image file and name so they can be viewed after the game. The third and final part of the game will be a section where you can browse the finished portraits and compare them to the original bio and the original photo the user submitted alongside it. The users will search by name and any portraits saved with that name will be brought up and shown off in a visual scroll across the screen.

## **Inspirations for this project**

The first project I used as motivation was the Ted Talk we watched for class by Aaron Koblin. The main thing I took away from this video was the idea of crowd-sourcing and having people create the data for you. I thought this idea was fun and would lead to a project that would unite people and give them a fun, carefree project to participate in. I also drew inspiration from the projects where he got people to submit drawings of a particular animal or thing and see how widely different the results were. Specifically the one where he asked for a drawing of a sheep was the biggest inspiration point as it included many examples where people just didn't try. Instead of drawing a sheep they would instead write "why" or "pay me more ", refusing to join and adding an element of chaos to the project. When I saw this portion of the video I was very entertained, laughing at the people who chose not to do such a simple task that was asked of them. This is what made me curious and pushed me to think about human error and how some people just don't cooperate even in the simplest, easiest taked given to them. While my project doesn't necessarily follow this idea, it did bring me to my next subject of inspiration.

The second project that inspired me isn't actually a project, it is instead a game I, and a lot of other people, played as a child. The game is called telephone, or broken telephone, and the goal is to keep a sentence or saying the same as it is whispered through a line of people. I thought of this game as soon as the idea of human error popped up as this game is built around that idea. It plays around the idea of how something as simple as a sentence can be so badly skewed as it travels the line of people. There's lots of ways the sentence can be skewed during the game. Sometimes it's an innocent mistake as a person doesn't hear the sentence when it is passed to them and ends up guessing what was said. Other times, people will intentionally say something different just to get a laugh at the end of the game. This is the main thing that inspired my project. The idea of passing something along and seeing how it is interpreted by each person it passes. I also wanted to incorporate the chaotic player by purposefully taking away info like children do to get a result that will make others laugh and be more entertained.

The last project that inspired me was the website game [Gartic Phone](#). The main thing I took inspiration from this website was its visuals and its layout. I really like the general aesthetics of the website and it's the kind of design I want to achieve with my own game website. I specifically want to recreate the canvas section, where it has all the information needed in front of you but still has plenty of space for the user to draw. This is the aspect of the project I'm most nervous about so having this as a reference will hopefully help later on. I also took inspiration from this project because it has a game that resembles the one I'm trying to make. This one took the telephone game and made it digital for people to have fun and play together. My plan is to take the concept of the game into a more critical lense by tampering with the data and using actual peoples profiles instead of random prompts.

**\*The visual storyboard for the project is in separate pdf attached**