Nym: Decentralised Digital Contacts Application

Bachelor Expose Presentation

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23/1/0855/047
SS2024 - Bachelor Exposé Preparation

Motivation

▋ Social Media is failing to deliver genuine connections.

▋ People are sharded online, current social media target engagement, not community.

▋ There is no current platform/tool that puts users in control of their networks.
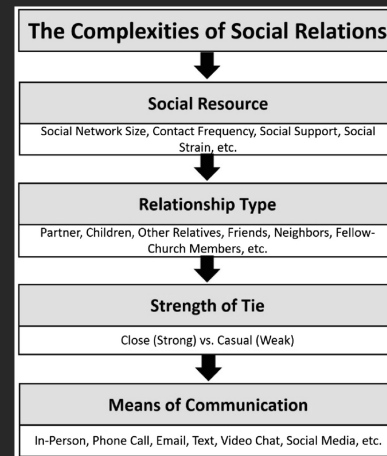
State of the Art

Importance of Social Relationships

- Strong correlation to physical, mental, and cognitive health.

Importance of Intentionality in a Relationship

- Intentional, private, and meaningful social ties can positively impact well-being.

Bridging the gap with my Thesis

The Complexities of Social Relations
Social Resource
Social Network Size, Contact Frequency, Social Support, Social Strain, etc.
Relationship Type
Partner, Children, Other Relatives, Friends, Neighbors, Fellow-Church Members, etc.
Strength of Tie
Close (Strong) vs. Casual (Weak)
Means of Communication
In-Person, Phone Call, Email, Text, Video Chat, Social Media, etc.

Problem Statement

█ People struggle to maintain meaningful social connections once traditional structures (school, work) disappear.

█ Existing platforms fragment identity and communication, reinforcing disconnection and performative interactions.

█ There is a lack of private, intentional, and user-controlled tools for managing social relationships.

Research Question

Does the integration of a privacy-first contact management tool improve:

- Interpersonal connectedness?
- Intrapersonal well-being?
- Awareness of relationship health?

Proposed Solution

■ A decentralized application that:

- Lets users manage personal contact information
- Supports context-based "Personas" for selective sharing
- Uses shareable links or QR codes for easy info exchange
- Prioritizes privacy, simplicity, and user control

Experimental Setup / Implementation Plan

Research Setup:

- Design surveys (RS and BS-AS) and evaluation plan
- Recruit participants

Implementation:

- Conduct research survey (RS)
- Build **prototype** (P)
- Conduct pre-usage survey (BS)
- Introduce participants to the app
- Conduct post-usage survey (AS)
- Collect usage data aggregate, where users opt-in

Analysis:

- Evaluate feedback and write paper

Challenges

Privacy concerns => mitigated by transparency and local storage

Social desirability bias => indirect questions and anonymized responses

Hawthorne effect => longer trial periods and realistic onboarding

Confirmation bias => open-ended feedback and control group if possible

Expected Outcomes

█ Increased user reflection on personal connections

█ Improved feeling of connectedness

█ Insight into design patterns for mindful tech

█ Foundation for future social tools beyond engagement metrics

Evaluation Plan

🟩 Quantitative Scores [BS & AS]

- Interpersonal connectedness ⇒ Social Connectedness Scale
- Intrapersonal well-being ⇒ WHO-5
- Awareness of relationship health ⇒ Likert-Scale 5/7

🟩 Qualitative [RS, BS & AS]

- Reflect on user experience, self reflection, and perceived utility.

🟩 Usage Metrics [where given]

🟪 Success Threshold

- >= 10% increase in self-reported connectedness
- Positive feedback in >= 70% of open responses
- Active usage during testing phase

Q&A

Thank you for participating