Nym:
Decentralised Digital Contacts Application
(Bachelor Expose Presentation)

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Outline

- Motivation

- State of the art

- Problem Statement

- Research Question

- Proposed Solution

- Experimental Setup / Implementation Plan
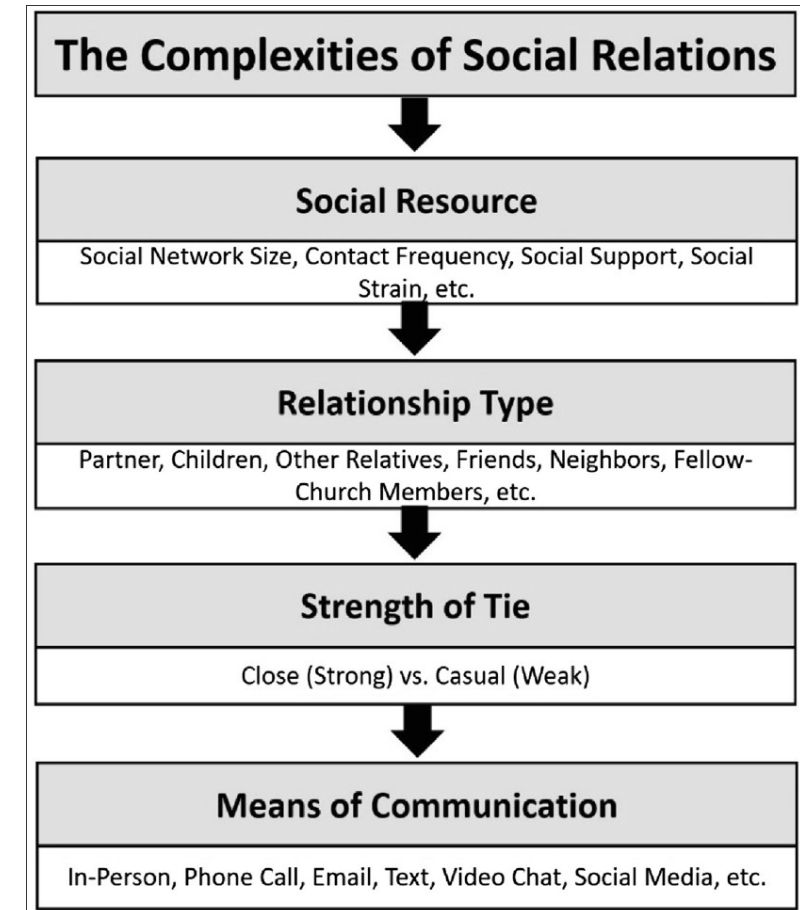
- Evaluation Plan

- Conclusion

Motivation

- Online Social Media (OSM) are failing to deliver genuine connections.

- People are sharded online, current social media prioritize engagement, not community.

- There is no current platform / tool that puts the users in control of their own social networks.

- Users are reduced to numbers, statistic, a source of revenue for the shareholders.

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

Sharifian N, Sol K, Zahodne LB, Antonucci TC. Social Relationships and Adaptation in Later Life. Comprehensive Clinical Psychology. 2022:52–72. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-12-818697-8.00016-9. Epub 2022 Apr 12. PMCID: PMC7500884.

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 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

Conclusion

- This thesis proposes a privacy-first, decentralized contact tool to strengthen meaningful relationships.

- Through surveys and usage data, we assess its impact on connectedness, well-being, and relationship awareness.