Problem Solving (A3) Report

Topic: Local Pet Community

Date: January 28, 2022
Name: Alejandro Ruiz Almodóvar

1. Identify a Problem | PLAN

ASK:
- Pet owners in Puerto Rico seeking a local pet community to engage in are left wanting more.
- There are no online communities for pet owners in Puerto Rico to plan pet meet ups, discuss pet problems in forums, sell or trade pet paraphernalia they no longer use or need, etc.
- Although Facebook Groups provides a platform to establish a pet community, during my research I found no local pet communities for planning pet meetups or to discuss pet problems here in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, in order to participate from such a community in Facebook Groups, a Facebook account is required. This poses a problem because it excludes a big population of pet owners who would want to be a part of a local pet community but would rather not use Facebook's services.

2. Set the Target | PLAN

ASK:
- What are your intermediate targets (milestones)?
    - Design and develop a web service that serves as a platform for the local pet owners to plan pet meet ups, discuss pet problems or general pet discussions in forums, sell or trade pet paraphernalia they no longer use or need, etc.

SHOW:
- Milestones and when do you expect to achieve them?
    - Outline project specifications for the proposal due February 23, 2022.
    - Capture domain requirements through project documentation.
    - Develop project using technologies specified in project proposal.
    - Finish project development in its entirety: code and documentation – by the end of this semester (May).

3. Analyze the Causes | PLAN

ASK:
- Pet owners in Puerto Rico wanting to find a local community where they can discuss topics regarding their pets and plan pet meetups **have a hard time finding such communities online**.

SHOW:
- *Why?:* There exists various platforms where such communities could be formed, making it a tedious process to sift through these platforms searching for a pet community, where in this case no local pet communities exist in the first place.
    - Most of these platforms require having a registered account thus complicating the community seeking process for people who don't have an account, and people who don't want to create an account in these platforms (e.g. Facebook).
    - Some people don't want to have to create a Facebook account, or an account for other social media platforms, for the sole purpose of participating from such a community. In some cases, such as the elderly population or people who don't have much experience technologically, find this process to be complicated.
- *Why?:* Platforms such as Facebook's Groups do not promote niche communities, such as this proposed pet community, due to the immense number of distinct communities hosted in the platform.
    - This means users must go out of their way to search for these communities, and in this case won't find one in Puerto Rico.
- *Why?:* No online pet communities, for planning pet meetups and pet discussions, exist in Puerto Rico as of yet.

4. Propose & Implement Countermeasures | PLAN/DO

ASK:
- What countermeasures are most likely to eliminate the Root Cause?
    - Design and implement a web service dedicated for the desired target audience.

SHOW:
Countermeasures:
- Define the target audience, in this case this would be pet owners in Puerto Rico who want to participate from a local pet community by using a user-friendly web service.
- Design and implement a web service dedicated for the desired target audience, which simplifies the process of participating from an online pet community through forum discussions, and the ability to plan local pet meetups.

5. Check/Evaluate | CHECK

ASK:
- Did the countermeasures work?
- Was the target achieved?

SHOW:
The web service must first be implemented before evaluating if the countermeasures were effective and the target was achieved.

In order to determine this, we may ask users of the web service to fill out a quick survey (questions regarding user's experience when using the web service, among other questions) so that we may evaluate their feedback and analyze the success of the platform and understand areas of improvement for the web service. Also, by measuring and analyzing the number of users participating from this community hosted on the web service, we may get a feel for the success or effectivity of this service.

6. Act and/or Standardize | ACT

ASK:
- How will we ensure the process continues to work (stays solved)?

SHOW:
- Maintain and support the continuous development of this web service.
- Promote this webservice through:
    - Social media posts or ads.
    - Printed flyers with an attractive promotion for this web service placed around campus, pet parks, or public spaces where there is a high concentration of pet owners. These flyers may also be handed out to pet shops (with the possibility of hosting an ad space within the web service to promote local pet shops, thus being a win-win for both parties).
    - Word of mouth from users of this web service.
- Employ moderators or automate moderation in order to ensure a safe space for the community. Moderation is important to prevent abuse within the web service or to prevent out of topic discussions (e.g. political discussions) specifically via the forums.
- Ease of use and accessibility must be the standard, so navigation through the web service should be simple, and all functionalities of this web service should be easy to grasp. A short video tutorial on how to use this web service's features may be provided in order to ensure all participants, and others who are interested but are yet to use the web service, understand how to efficiently use the web service regardless of technological background.