Bookmate Proposal

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Identified Problem:

Every academic quarter, students are likely to spend several hundred dollars on textbooks. Then, at the end of the term, students no longer have use for their textbooks, and are left no better choice but to sell them back to the original retailer for a small fraction of the retail price. Meanwhile, a new set of students on campus will need the same book the next term, and will need to buy it for full (or close to full) price.Students are always looking for ways to reduce the price of their textbooks, but there are no current options that are both extremely convenient, reliable, and significantly cheaper than retail.

Project Description:

We plan to create a web application designed to provide students with a platform to buy, sell, and exchange textbooks on the UW campus. Our solution will focus on generating convenient, seamless, and mutually beneficial transactions between students. To do this, our implementation will take the form of a web application.

Timeline

Milestone I (April 28th): *Initial research and design work*

- User research
- Synthesize research findings and develop key functionality
- Develop information architecture
- Create initial design (sketches)

---------- April 18th ----------

- Do paper prototyping and usability test, round I
- re-design
- paper prototyping and usability test, round II
- re-design

---------- April 26th ----------

- Create digital mockups (website & phone layout)
- Figuring out the platforms and the libraries for development
    - Figure out messaging / texting API
    - Figure out chat API

Milestone II (May 12th): *Develop both front and back end frameworks/designs*

- Develop the database system and crawler for gathering books information (back end)
- Develop searching system for books by filters (front end)

- Develop the database for user profiles (including the books they bought, sell or exchange) (back end)
- Develop the user profile and book listing page (front end)
- Develop the login page system (front end & back end)

Milestone III (May 26th): *Integrate additional functionality, evaluative testing and final front end design adjustments*

- Develop chat system
- Notification system
- Evaluative testing
- Website

Success factors

A successful implementation will be a high fidelity prototype, which will allow us to test the core functionality of our solution: Users should be able to create a profile, search for books, place books in both “need” and “want” lists, and chat with other users. A notification system should also be in place to improve the connectivity of the web app. Additionally, the solution should be able to update its database based on transactions. Beyond this functionality, we should have reached a very fluid and usable design, and user testing should confirm that this is the case. Ultimately, our final design and evaluations should position us to generate clear next steps in working towards a final implementation that is ready for production.

Risks (and mitigation plan)

The primary risk is falling short of our implementation goals. In order to mitigate this potential problem, we will break down our overall prototype deliverables into smaller tasks that are easier to complete and that we can quickly iterate on. With these smaller tasks, we can then build upon our quickly and ensure that we are on track at each checkpoint.

Another potential risk is that the solution we produce is not significantly better than existing tools for buying and selling used textbooks. To address this risk, we will conduct thorough user research and usability testing in order to identify user needs. These methods will help us to make meaningful design decisions and reach an effective solution.