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EECE 4081
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Vision Statement Assignment

What world problem are you concerned about?

Social Apathy is a problem where people all over the world seem to not care (or don't want to be bothered by) the social and/or economic problems around them. Some examples of this include pollution, homelessness, poverty, natural disasters, etc. And for some this apathy extends into their personal lives where they don't seem to care about their own health or well-being.

Why is this problem important?

Social Apathy is a growing problem, and it's one that affects everyone because in some form or fashion, someone's decision to do, or not do something can impact everyone else. For example, more people are starting to care about our environment, but there is still a large group of people who don't put much thought into environmentally friendly practices, such as recycling. If more people cared and participated in these environmentally friendly activities, there's a possibility that we would not have issues relating to pollution.

What aspect of this problem seems particularly important to you?

Over the past few years, social media has helped to remediate Social Apathy by allowing people to connect with others all over the world. Today, social media is a large part of everyday life but not many have tried to use it so solve world problems on a global scale. Ideally a system to promote solving world problems that's based on social media could help solve (or at least relieve) some global problems such as pollution. In addition, this system would also get more people to care about what's going on around them (promote Social Empathy vs. Apathy)

How could a new software system help to solve this aspect of the problem?

A new software system could help to engage more people into becoming more socially and personally empathetic by providing incentives to perform positive acts; be it for themselves, their community or the world as a whole. These incentives will be similar to an achievement or karma points system. For each positive act a person performs, they will be rewarded and will want to perform more positive acts to gain more points for more rewards.

This system would have to major components

The first component would consist of three databases and a website. The first will contain the partners who are willing to participate in the program. The second will contain and keep track of users, their points and completed positive acts. The third will contain the list of positive

acts that can be completed by a user and will consist of 3 levels; personal, community and world. The website will allow users and partners to register and view data.

The ideal scenario would have a retailer or other organization come to a site and register to become a participant. As a participant, they would agree to allow users of this site to redeem their points for actual goods. Next, a user will register and proceed to perform positive acts that result in points being awarded to them. Once they have enough points, they can purchase or get a discount on goods from participating partners. In addition, users who use their points towards other positive acts will receive some form of bonus. For example, if someone decided to take a larger interest in their personal health and performed acts toward that goal, they would receive points. At that point, they could redeem those points for goods from a participating retailer. However, if this user (who has taken greater interest in their health) decides to buy something like a bike or something that contributes to their personal health, they will be rewarded with bonus points. Additionally, if this user then used that bike to ride to work (cutting down pollution) they would be rewarded with points for that as well.

The second component will be the users themselves. Since social networking is virtually a part of everyday life now, integration with sites such as Facebook will be key in trying to promote the site and getting more people involved in solving the problem of social apathy

Why do you think that this idea will make a big impact on the world?

While there are many people in the world who willingly help others or help to solve world problems, there is a large group of people that don't or don't care enough to do anything. One of the causes of Social Apathy is the mentality of "how will I benefit from this?" Unfortunately, some people will not act unless they are rewarded in some form or fashion. This system won't solve that problem, but will rather take advantage of it by allowing people to get rewards for good deeds and at the same time help solve a world problem. (Carrot vs. Stick approach) Having a system like this in place would help encourage people to take a more active role in helping their environment

What sources did you use in writing this vision statement?