

Supporting Interactive Fundraising for Gen X Cancer Survivors and
Co-Survivors in the New England Area

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Abstract

Two theories were used in creating the application. The first, Human Centered Design accounts for a number of factors which support a design in being user-friendly and highly functional. The second, Engestrom's Activity Theory, which stipulates for certain outcomes (goals) it is necessary to produce certain objects (experiences and knowledge). The question under investigation was: Can a mobile application provide interested parties transparent nonprofit financial information and allow them to make a personal contribution?

Through the process of prototyping it was found that a mobile application can connect an individual to an organization. It was also found that it is possible for said application to create a connection that results in real world impact by providing clear and easy methods of contributing time and money. In providing this medium of connecting the user to an organization it was also found the organization can provide user impact data through the application to share real time data generating a cycle of application use, impact and reporting which builds over time.

The application has been fully prototyped but has not yet been tested in a real world environment. The prototype can be viewed by downloading App Taster (<https://itunes.apple.com/app/id518977767>) and opening the prototype file (<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tzg8kv1dwnjtji/AABrcWwi1c23fC0Hm7oOB5hPa?dl=0>).

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Introduction

The rise and wide-spread adoption of mobile technology since the introduction of the iPhone and similar devices in 2007 has changed the way people engage with information. Nonprofits are finding it increasingly difficult to connect in meaningful ways with new constituents while retaining current constituents and providing an added relationship value. This is the purpose for this project, the creation of a mobile application which connects individuals to known and new nonprofits. The application consists of three ways for the constituent to engage the organization: Donating financially, donating time or donating volunteer hours.

A majority of nonprofit organizations raise money through one or more of three main mediums: Events, email and direct mail. Over the past fifteen years the email and events mediums have grown to a point of oversaturation. I currently work within a marketing and technology agency which partners with organizations to assist them in growing their constituent database while converting inactive individuals into active event participants and fundraisers. Having spent time working alongside the individuals in nonprofits who are trying to meet ambitious goals there is often a tone of frustration regarding technology. A desire to avoid spending and the high up-front costs of new systems often sways individuals from moving their organization forward with new tools. Next is the ability to successfully adopt, learn and share a new tool. A third limitation is the small number of tools available which are not controlled by a single entity and in the end often have hidden fees or long term costs that don't generate enough revenue to justify use. For this project I have developed a prototype of a mobile application which would not belong to a single nonprofit but to the public in a capacity to help them make new connections. An organization could easily share the download link without suffering a penalty of cost while benefit from a new constituent name or donation that may have otherwise not found them online.

Background

The current model around online fundraising is to heavily email constituents in an effort to encourage event registration and then add additional emails to encourage fundraising. A typical event cycle begins six months prior to event date with weekly emails and list segmentation that increases in number and frequency as the event draws near. Often, if there is a slump in registration or fundraising additional emails will be added to an already overcrowded email schedule. This can be considered beating the drum but in actuality it can cause constituents to disconnect due to over communication or poor communication.

Industry standards hover around a mere 15% for email open rates and 2% for link click rates. When we consider that many large organizations have more than 200,000 individuals in their database it's a large effort with little return. This obvious lack of email reception has encouraged many companies to develop mobile applications for nonprofits to support their fundraising efforts. When you search "giving" in the Apple App Store® there are an innumerable amount of application returns. Adding to the difficulty is the concept of each organization having an individual application which only serves that one organization and their one base of constituents.

It is also worth considering that the alternate for an organization sending emails is to send out direct mail. Direct mail may consist of a letter or small flyer sent to an individual at their home or other listed address. The cost for a large direct mail campaign can easily run more than \$500,000. The traditional model promises a return on investment by year five with costs coming down slightly year over year, but remaining well above \$100,000 for the lifetime of the campaign. This means any small organization is immediately priced out of such a service. The large organizations which can afford this type of service are only reaching the individuals they already know or have some potential connection. List purchasing services, those that are reputable, only provide names of individuals who have expressed interest in an organization through tools such as an online survey. This limits the pool of new constituents and again turns into an effort to engage only the existing database constituents.

Last but not least are the organizations using events to drive fundraising and engagement. This is no small task and can easily turn sour if the market shifts. There was a great deal of success with Zombie Runs and Color Runs around 2012, but by 2014 the original company that brought about the Zombie Run was out of business and only a few imitators remained. More expensive events like Spartan Runs and Urban Mud Runs are trying to appeal to athletic groups, but the expensive registration fee prices many individuals out of participating. This leaves the 5K events with small fees but a group of constituents who may have been more interested in participating ten years ago than they are today. Across the board these events are experiencing decline in participation and the number of returning participants. A main complaint received in many post event surveys, in my experience, is that there is nothing new at events which have been around for five or more years. Those events which have introduced new features, such as live bands, often receive backlash from their long standing supporters. It's a fine line that organizations are forced to walk.

Now dawns the modern age of technology and the tools which are taking over tasks as simple as turning on lights in a person's home. Nonprofits have not always been the most willing to accept new technology and tools, but after many years more and more are interested in what mobile applications have to offer. ChorusConnect, a company recently acquired by Blackbaud, Inc., created a Friends Asking Friends mobile application which was able to easily connect to events built on the Sphere platform. Users were able to fundraise from their personalized page, even going so far as to sending out fundraising emails and social status updates. The initial drawback to the application is cost, the one-time setup fee of \$8,500, including no support services, didn't drive business. What this application did do was create competition. Other companies introduced similar applications for the Sphere system as well as competitors. This led to a large number of organizations wanting their own personalized application. Today, if you search for Susan G. Komen®, a breast cancer research and education organization, in the Apple App Store® you will find a number of applications. There is one controlled by the US National Affiliate, many belonging to individual state affiliates and even a few for international affiliates. Which leads back to my original research question: Can a mobile

application provide interested parties transparent nonprofit financial information and allow them to make a personal contribution?

Today there is no one application tackling this idea as most are only trying to provide a new way to donate. There is an importance to providing clear information about the organization. This information should not require searching third party websites like GuideStar, though it is an excellent resource, the information should be as easy to find as it is to click the donate button.

Problem Statement

There are a large number of for profit companies serving the nonprofit sector when it comes to software. Players include, but are not limited, companies such as Blackbaud, Inc., Global Cloud, Constant Contact, etc. The companies share a common thread when it comes to their products, each assumes the individual who is making a donation for participating in fundraising is mainly connecting through a desktop computer. A majority of web pages and donation forms associated with the nonprofits using software provided by these companies are not mobile friendly. The limited number which are mobile friendly have very few options outside of making a direct donation. If the donor wishes to learn more about an organization before making a gift it becomes tedious to root through web pages, again, many of which are not created for use on a mobile device, and only when and if they find the desired information, return to a donation form to complete their transaction.

Along with the difficulty in finding information about nonprofits which an individual may not know a great deal about, or may be discovering for the first time, it is incredibly difficult to understand the breakdown of how the organization uses dollars donated by the public. A majority of this information is available on the Internet through organizations such as GuideStar, a nonprofit created with a goal to provide financial transparency for all nonprofits to the public. Knowing it is unlikely the average donor will be willing to do this much research, or know how to do the research on how organizations use their dollars raised is what led to my research question:

Can a mobile application provide interested parties transparent nonprofit financial information and allow them to make a personal contribution?

When considering how to design a prototype of the application titled 'Im:Pact' for the target audience, I applied three secondary research questions to guide me toward the primary goal:

- 1. How can Human Centered Design principals influence and direct user flow?**
- 2. Is it possible to illustrate an organization's mission and community impact through a mobile application?**

- 3. Can user data be tracked and reported to demonstrate the applications successful implementation?**

Literature Review

Nonprofits and event based fundraising have grown radically over the last two decades. The widespread availability of the Internet led to the development of peer-to-peer software which made fundraising accessible to individuals from all walks of life. A majority of these programs were created prior to the explosion of social networking sites and have struggled to effectively roll such tools into existing programs. With the introduction of smartphones and the ability to communicate on demand, in real-time through applications, peer based fundraising is at a tipping point. The tools created in and around 2000 are no longer as effective, relying on individuals sending emails to garner fundraising support from friends and family. In reality, the majority of Gen X individuals who are currently in their prime income earning years are turning away from email and finding no effective alternative to allow them to participate in fundraising. At the same time there are few effective tools available to feed the desire for social interaction outside of turning to services like Facebook which force the user to sort through thousands of content posts each day in search of their interests.

Information Design

The ability to share information can be enhanced by applying Cooley's Human Centered Design theory (Jacobson, 2000). Human Centered Design accounts for a number of factors which support a design in being user-friendly and highly functional. These factors include: Coherence, inclusiveness, malleability, engagement, ownership, responsiveness, purpose, panoramic and transcendence. Cooley's Human Centered Design theory can be applied to several areas of a mobile application to support the overall architecture as well as the resulting user experience.

Engagement

The goal of most mobile applications is to engage the user in a way that is entertaining and informative. This creates a value which can bring the user back to the application after the initial

download and interaction. There are four key dashboards the user can engage with to determine their experience.

The home screen (Figure 1) allows the user to immediately login or register. The home screen consists of a logo intended to look like wrapped arms to display a sense of community, connection and inclusiveness. The action buttons, along with all buttons within the application are green, a color associated with growth and health, and blue, a color associated with trust and strength (Ciotti, 2014). When we consider the application is intended to promote individual giving in multiple ways it's important to convey a sense of calm and security, especially when it comes to the screens which allow for sensitive information to be entered, such as a credit card number. All screens, beginning with the home page are intended to have a minimalist construction. With the intention of always providing the user only two methods of progressing towards the end goal of contributing, the blue and green action buttons are intended to be a focal point, while mainly surrounded by white space.

I envision the user having the ability to tick a box in a live version of the application which would save the user's login credentials and bypass the home screen and always begin from the Main Dashboard (Figure 2). The goal of the application is to help the user discover a new charity and give immediately to a known charity. It will increase effectiveness in being able to skip the home screen after the initial visit. Figure two continues in a minimalist fashion with buttons of green and blue. In my opinion green is the more engaging of the two colors, thus it has been assigned to the 'Select a Charity' button. When 'Select a Charity' is selected the user will see the Select a Charity Dashboard (Figure 3). By scrolling through an alphabetized list of nonprofits the user can locate the desired nonprofit and engage either by giving time or money as well as learning additional information about the nonprofit. There are additional options on this screen, though they retain the theme of placing the user on two tracks to complete a goal. The top row of icons all directly link to giving pages. The second row of icons link to informational pages which in turn link to giving pages. Circular icons were selected as they are in sync with the shape of a finger when making a selection.

This also provides some additional space between the icons in an effort to reduce incorrect selection for individuals with larger fingers.

A rich pink and purple were selected for the social and volunteer buttons to compliment the blue and green buttons on earlier screens while retaining positive feelings about the application and the process of contributing. The icons themselves were used to reduce copy and engage the user visually. A credit card icon indicates financial actions, the Facebook icon indicates social actions and the clock indicates volunteer actions. These three icons are easily recognizable and even if the user doesn't immediately understand the action, once clicked it is easy to make the connection between the credit card icon and the donation form. The same is true for the Facebook and clock icons.

To assist users who may be interested in supporting a nonprofit but are unsure where their time and money will have the biggest impact, Discover a Charity will lead the user to a dashboard (Figure 4) where they can scroll through a listing of charity affiliation types, which will then open an additional menu scroll for the user to select a charity falling under the original category. For example: Selecting the 'cancer' category will allow the user to select a nonprofit such as the American Cancer Society. Once a nonprofit has been selected the user can explore information related to spending, which includes salary and marketing expenses, Charity Navigator ratings and annual reports. Helping the user become informed of how time and money are invested before committing to give.

Figure 4 intentionally lacks in icons and uses text to convey information. This is to assist the user in quickly find information on a specific topic of interest, such as the organization's Annual Reports. A portion of the primary research question asks if it is possible to clearly convey information about the organization. By being direct and using simple copy this is possible and is illustrated within Figure 4.



Figure 1: Home Screen



Figure 2: Main Dashboard

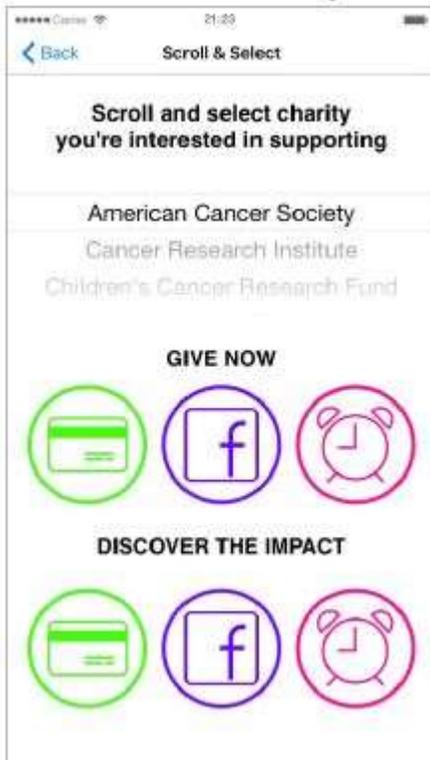


Figure 3: Select a Charity Dashboard

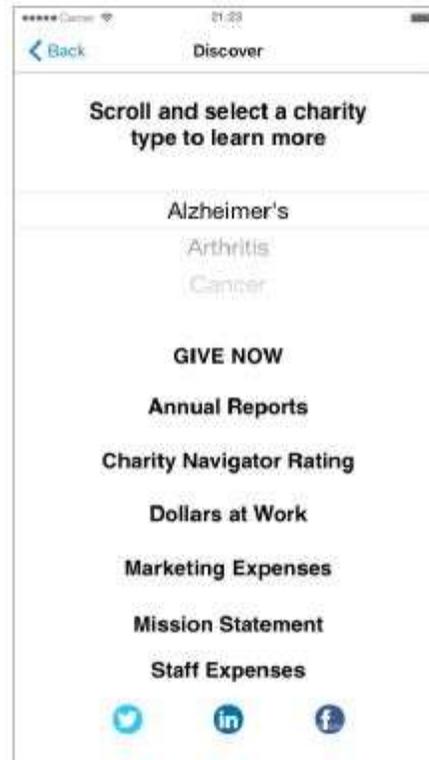


Figure 4: Discover a Charity Dashboard

Coherence

The underlying meaning of the application is presented in the name. Im:Pact, or impact when you remove the colon, is intended to allow users to have a personal impact through the use of the application. Such impact can be achieved by making a financial contribution, volunteering time or donating a Facebook status. All allow the user to give back to their community and support a nonprofit of their choosing.

Inclusiveness

This is how the system invites the user into the system and makes one feel a part of the community (Cooley, 1999). The ability to donate a social media, at this point in the prototype it is specifically a Facebook status but something I would like to expand to have more options, is where a user can connect to a live community. Figure 3 allows the user to click the Facebook icon under

Give Now. The user now has the ability to connect their Facebook account and donate their social status (Figure 5). This will allow the nonprofit of the user's selection to push one or more messages, depending upon the users setting preferences, out to garner additional support. For example: A message could be pushed around Thanksgiving to recruit individuals to volunteer in a soup kitchen supported by the selected nonprofit. Figure 5 provides three simple selection areas: One time posts, weekly posts and monthly posts. The user will see a green check box to indicate their selection and for the repeating selections is provided a dropdown menu to designate the number of posts allowed. A short disclaimer at the bottom of the screen ensures the user the posts made on their behalf by the organization will be mission based and this will not be an attempt to garner free marketing at the user's expense.

Figure 5: Facebook - Give Now

Malleability

This is the opportunity to mold a situation to the user's wants (Cooley, 1999). Within the application the user has a number of options to determine how to engage the application. This begins from the home screen where they enter as a new or returning user. After logging into the application or registering it becomes possible to select a nonprofit or sort through charity categories to discover a new nonprofit.

Today there are no malleable settings that the user can personalize such as color, sound or text size. However, the user determines their experience by the way they decide to move through the application. There is no limitation on the number of nonprofits a user can look up to learn about, nor a time limit to how long a single nonprofit can be viewed within the application. The user determines when the experience begins and ends.

Responsiveness

The application which will run on an iOS device such as an iPhone or iPad will respond to the user's touch and device positioning. With a thumb or index finger the user can navigate forward and back throughout the application to research nonprofits as well as make contributions. The device itself may help in portrait or landscape mode to determine the positioning of information. For the prototype's creating, images were created in portrait layout.

Purpose

When the system is capable of responding to the purpose the user has in mind and supports them to go beyond we fulfill the concept of purpose (Cooley, 1999). The application allows the user to explore nonprofits which may lead to a feeling of empowerment. By truly understanding how a nonprofit is investing their donation dollars and volunteer hours into a community a user may be encouraged to give more and build a longer, more meaningful relationship with the nonprofit. This could extend beyond the mobile application through the use of the volunteer area (Figure 6). Figure 6 shows how in simple fashion volunteer positions may be made accessible through the application

to the public while allowing any user to make the commitment to act. A green checkbox confirms the user's selection and ensures them that a confirmation with detailed volunteer information. The green submission button stands out to draw in the user to complete the action while taking advantage of the colors ability to provide a sense of calm. This may be helpful if it is a person's first time making the decision to contribute time to a cause.



Figure 6: Volunteer - Give Now

Panoramic/ Transcendence

Panoramic allows the user to have a deeper view of something, while Transcendence encourages the user to go beyond the immediate task at hand (Cooley, 1999). The user has the ability to dig deep into the financial information about a nonprofit listed within the application. Discovering staff salary expenses (Figure 7), annual report (Figure 8) and the impact of dollars raised through the application (Figure 9). The intended and immediate task presented to the user is to make a contribution of some sort. Though the user is encouraged through the volunteer position

selection and social media status donation to make longer term connections that can lead to increased connection and communication with their nonprofit of choice.

Figure 7 utilizes public salary data provided through Glassdoor.com to share employee information. This makes it possible to share current salary information about organization employees, even if it may be difficult to find within annual reports and other financial documents produced by the organization. Pulling this data from Glassdoor.com also makes it possible for the application to remain without bias, pulling public data and not singling out any specific data on one organization that may not be available for another.

Figure 8 utilizes the familiar PDF icon to illustrate document downloads. Depending on the organization these documents may be one to two years out of data, while being considered current. The icons have the downward facing arrow to encourage the user to click, download and view the financial PDF. The information contained here is produced by each nonprofit and again allows the application be without bias, displaying all available Annual Reports. This would require a large effort to gather and maintain the database of documents if the application is made available to large portions of the country. As the application is only targeting the New England area, it is a much more manageable and realistic process.

Figure 9 illustrates a simple information graphic of how the funds donated through the [Im:Pact](#) application are making a difference to a selected organization. Depending on the organization and how they invest their funds raised it is possible to break the contributions into areas of education and services provided. Gender free icons are used to represent the dollars raised in hundreds. For those who are more visual this helps to illustrate the impact beyond the point of simply reading a factoid.

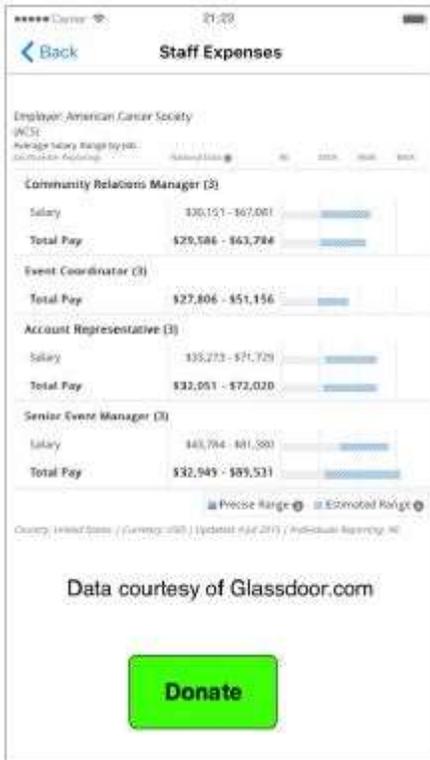


Figure 7: Staff Expenses

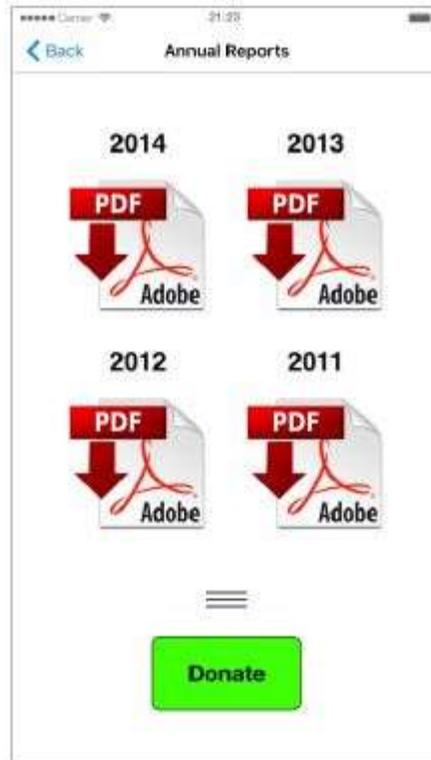


Figure 8: Annual Reports

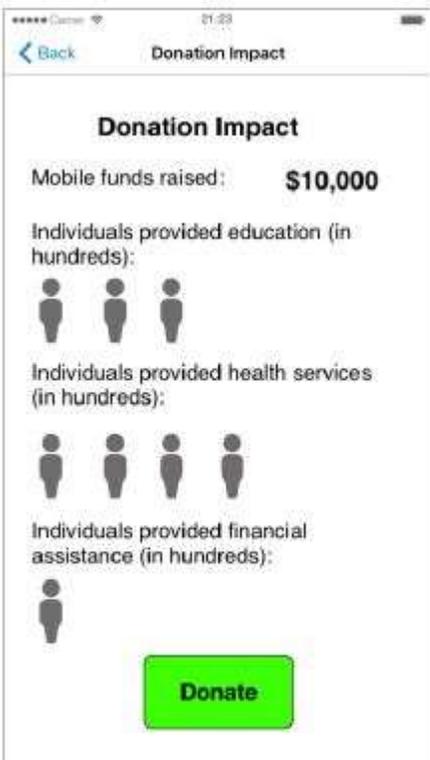


Figure 9: App Donation Impact

In addition to employing Human Centered Design Im:Pact relies on Engestrom's Activity Theory. In order to achieve certain outcomes (goals) it is necessary to produce certain objects (experiences and knowledge). The application acts as the object which is providing users with an umbrella setting. By this I mean that no specific nonprofit has control over the application, the intent is that it would be shared through an impartial group like that of Charity Navigator. This allows for a user to explore and learn about nonprofits from an array of areas without interruption or manipulation. Providing a wealth of clear information, the user can progress towards the intended outcome of making a contribution in one of three areas. The app is structured in such a way that the ability to make a personal contribution is available at all times through donate (Figure 10) and volunteer (Figure 11) buttons.

Figure 10 is the heart of the information sharing capabilities of the application. An organization is only as good as the mission it is built upon. Figure 10 shares the exact mission as told by the organization. This may be considered the elevator pitch to draw in a new constituent, allowing those moved by the mission to take action through the green call to action button and begin the process of completing a goal to contribute. Secondary information is available for individuals who may be doing in depth research, including the web address, blog information and the EIN for tax purposes.

Figure 11 is another information based screen to help the user understand the impact of the application by sharing the volunteer statistics. Based upon the number of users that complete a volunteer position sign up through the application it is possible to then break the sign ups down. The application can display the number of volunteers, the hours volunteered, projects completed and even the number of approximate community members impacted by the volunteer project. There will

need to be a confirmation process with the organization in place to confirm volunteers completed the action if the numbers are to be more than approximations.



Figure 10: Mission Statement



Figure 11: App Volunteer Impact

Data Tracking and Reporting

Google Analytics

The success of a mobile application goes beyond use by the public. For a free application, which Im:Pact is intended to be, it is market penetration which will determine success. Marketing is key to spreading app usage and awareness, and data is required to know how the application is performing.

Application Adoption

There is no need to reinvent the wheel in regard to reporting. Google Analytics is a free tool which offers mobile application specific tools for reporting. Embedding the Google Analytics code into the application makes it possible to view user data such as new and returning visitors (Figure

12) as well as where users are coming from around the world (Figure 13). Figures 12 and 13 break down the type of device users are possessing when engaging with the application as well as their country of origin. This makes it possible to improve application features and functionality per operating system and to grow the applications marketing efforts in countries that are underperforming or to increase marketing to grow a specific market sector.

Operating System	New Users
iOS	448
Android	215

Figure 12: New Users

1.	 United States
2.	 Germany
3.	 China
4.	 Georgia
5.	 Bulgaria

Figure 14: User Location



Figure 13: User Page Dropoff

Application Improvement

Beyond the number of users engaging with an application, Google Analytics makes it possible to see where users are leaving the application (Figure 14). This makes it possible to evolve and improve the application. If key content is being missed or pages have a high drop off rate it is

easy to see and allows for the application to be updated in an effort to reduce user drop off and increase goal (contribution) completion. Figures 12, 13 and 14 are all external to the application and require a web browser to collect the data. The Google Analytics program is embedded into the application through a snippet of code that then crawls the application to report back user findings. It is through the use of this tool that the application usage can go beyond theory and into user cultivation, growth and retention.

The Socialization of Fundraising

Madell and Muncer utilized Grounded Theory along with their focus groups to record individual preferences regarding social media usage and behaviors. From the data collected it was found “control over social interactions” (Madell. Muncer. Page 138.) was a prime motivator in the draw of social networking platforms. Though the group studied are Millennials and young Gen X individuals, the same is true for most people who take advantage of social media. There is an ability to control the engagement and even guide it to be perceived in certain ways. This was also found more effective with social media as a preference over communication methods such as text messaging where the “comments could be misunderstood; especially those of a sarcastic nature, and that the message could also be sent to the wrong person.” (Madell. Muncer. Page 138.)

Nonprofits are seeing the value of social media more than ever, groups such as Comic Relief are tailoring their events to offer special social events. Taking place exclusively on Facebook and Twitter, supporters can gain special insight, content and celebrity endorsements by engaging at specified times. (New Age Media.) With a larger Gen X and growing Millennial population it makes sense for nonprofits to follow the trend of social media. We can see from the Madell and Muncer study that there are strong opinions on why social media works. The monetization is the component that must be focused upon as there are many tools available but none yet honed for this avenue of interaction.

Heintzeler, Legler, Adeli, Huerta and Elaluf-Calderwood explore the value add of mobile technology. They point to a few advantages of such devices: Connectivity, personalization and location. It is possible to be online at all times with a cellular connection, this means access to information and the Internet at all hours of the day. A majority of applications and social networks can pull from data already stored in a user's phone. This means there is less of a need to ask for information to begin delivering a customized experience that feels personal. Users want to feel special, even if it's as simple as addressing them by name, it begins to build a relationship and confidence, yes, confidence in the technology as being "human." Location means little with mobile devices as there are fewer and fewer places where people are not connected. This means the publisher of content, in this case the nonprofit, can engage with the donor at any time and in any place. This helps remove the need for costly events when donors may be spread over vast distances or even in a multitude of countries.

Im:Pact allows the user to connect their Facebook account to the application. It is possible with current Facebook API settings to download more than two-hundred bits of information for every user that connects. This can range from email address to personal interests, none of which the user has to explicitly allow as they are mass accepted as soon as the user connects their account. It is best practice for any application downloading information to be transparent, but it also means it is possible to build an impressive and deep user database with clear pictures of who the application users are and what content is of interest.

Mobilize and Monetize

American Cancer Society is well aware of the benefit of utilizing social and mobile features to engage their donors. In a world where donors are asked to donate on a regular, or at least, an annual basis it is necessary to make the process quick and easy. As stated by their CIO, "The ultimate strategy here is to meet people where they want to give." (Brousell. Page 12.) With the rollout of their first iOS based application and using software made available by PayPal, a phone can

be used to securely take a photo of a check or credit card. This doesn't save any of the information to the cellular device, but immediately submits the card or check for processing. In this manner, the American Cancer Society is making it possible to monetize mobile devices. An item which a majority of individuals have readily available to them at all times.

"Mobile phones are probably responsible for the greatest number of recent significant changes to philanthropy." (Kandasamy. Page 1) GiveDirectly, though not supporting cancer research or fundraising, has found a way to take donations made by phone and send them to individuals in developing countries who have a phone with text based capabilities. In this regard, phones are actually the donation and payment portal. Making it possible to fundraise and generate and impact without the need for a computer, event or additional high-cost connection points that have traditionally motivated individuals to support an organization.

Im:Pact tries to employ monetized socialization. Figure 5 displays the ability for a user to allow a nonprofit to push out a Facebook status to their personal account on a one-time or recurring basis. For the nonprofit this means they can push out calls to action, donation requests and volunteer recruitment via a network of connected individuals to reach people they may not have in their existing databases. This is a way for the nonprofit to cultivate additional individual's contact information at no cost. Using traditional email and mailing address list buy services it could be incredibly expensive to achieve the same sort of information but in a way that is not as personally connected to the new individuals. Meaning there is an immediate level of confidence and trust because the post is coming from a "friend" and a reduced budget expense for the nonprofit.

User Demand Generates the Need

Simply stating that mobile devices are the future of fundraising is shortsighted. It may sound obvious, because in hindsight we can see how fast and widely smartphones have been adopted and the eruption of mobile application development for many platforms, but it is the user demand that creates the needs and opportunities. "New devices, new operating systems and new user

expectations create a complex matrix of features and functionality; publishers have to keep up with.”
(Rapple. Page S57.)

Through interviews by phone with scholars to discuss the availability of scholarly articles on websites and the desire to have mobile availability, the initial results were inconclusive. Prior to the widespread use of smartphones, it was difficult for people to understand or foresee the need for database availability on a phone. Just five years after the publication of this article there is a clear need for websites to be mobile responsive and for a mass availability of information in mobile views. People turn to their phone for information and interaction before they sit down at a computer. It is also ease of access when one considers that individuals generally have their mobile device within a few feet of their person at all times. If this is the device of choice, it begins to make sense that it should also be the choice device for generating interactions.

There are numerous applications available to support individual giving, but almost all of those reviewed are connected to one nonprofit. When the applications exist in a silo it is possible to withhold information and even distort giving statistics to the advantage of the nonprofit controlling the application. That is not to say any of the nonprofits mentioned in this document are doing anything unethical with their mobile applications. The goal of Im:Pact is to move beyond a silo of information and provide a more comprehensive, clear and connected community that has access to a wealth of data across the board with nonprofits. This provides the user with a single point of access to every nonprofit, versus a single point of entry to a single nonprofit. Ideally, the user will explore and find additional nonprofits with which to engage and increase their overall contributions in a number of areas.

Methodology

Wireframing Tools

In the initial search to determine a wireframing product that offered flexibility as well as a depth of resources, the original choice settled upon was [Fluid UI](#). The tool offers a clean and easy to use product with drag-and-drop functionality. Creating a wireframe for a mobile application is simplified and easy to move into the prototyping phase. I swayed from this product as I found, in the free version, when creating a project, you as a designer or developer are limited to the number of available resources (icons, images, etc.).

With a moderate budget to invest in the tools to create my application wireframe and prototype, I selected [App Cooker](#). The draw of App Cooker stemmed from the option to not only wireframe a mobile application, but also flush out the concepts, apply design items and even push it to market in the App Store®. The catch of the product is that it only functions on iOS mobile devices. Meaning, any creating that takes place must be done on an iPad or iPhone, there is no ability to utilize a computer. This was another draw as I thought it would force me to engage the app from a more practical user level as I must use my fingers to tap, swipe and build out the application.

Conceptualization

According to Charity Navigator, total giving to charitable organizations was \$358.38 billion in 2014. This is an increase of 7.1% in current dollars and 5.4% in inflation-adjusted dollars from 2013. 2015 is expected to follow suit as charitable giving continues to increase. People are giving for many reasons, tax-deductions, personal connections and sometimes to simply give back to their community. (Annual Report on Philanthropy. 2015)

The data makes it sound as though everyone is reaching into their wallets and handing over fistfuls of money to nonprofits. In reality, it's difficult for nonprofits to find new donors and for individuals who have not been impacted by a major life death, such as the loss of a family member to cancer, to discover charities they may be interested in supporting. This is where the idea for my

project stems, an application which can help individuals give to their favorite charities, and more important, help people who want to give to charity find a nonprofit that aligns with their values and beliefs.

This is not to say there are not many mobile applications online with the purpose of supporting nonprofits. Those I found through my research are created and promoted by one specific nonprofit. This means, you need to know the nonprofit and seek out their application. Once downloaded, the app will only support this specific nonprofit, offering the user no room to explore or discover.

Mobile Applications Reviewed:

- **Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure®:** This application allows a user to download the application and login with their event credentials. Not geared directly towards asking the user to make a donation, it enables the user to fundraise to meet fundraising requirements associated with their event participation.
- **Arthritis Foundation Jingle Bell Run®:** Another application created with the intent of allowing users to fundraise in support of their event goals.
- **GiveEasy:** This application has a similar intent to what I am aiming to create. The app allows users in Australia to make a donation to any charity they so choose. With a clean and well formatted landing page the user can navigate charities by category, enter an amount and give by charging a credit card.

Through the research of these applications it became clear there was a market for more than just financial giving via mobile applications. Which expanded the concept from allowing users of an app to simply donate, but to also allow them to volunteer time, or contribute their Facebook status in support of their charity of choice. Allowing users more control over how they engage with nonprofits and expanding the ways to give, which opens the market to individuals who may not have the financial means to contribute as they may wish.

Design Process

The initial wireframing of the application became tedious when trying to use prototyping software and I settled for pen and paper to map out the rough screens needed to compose the application. Utilizing an iterative design process, I took the paper mock ups and began to compose and rework the screens with App Cooker. As screens were created I would push them to a companion application, App Taster, allowing me to not only see the application live on an iOS device, but to physically click through the application.

As screens were added it was possible to test, revise and test once more. App Cooker allowed me to physically, through touch and not simply with the help of a mouse, place every icon, piece of copy and graphic within the application. This was helpful in designing the flow of the application in an effort to gear the experience to drive the user towards completing the task of making a contribution, be it money, time or a social media status.

Conclusion

The evolution of peer-based fundraising and web-based fundraising are two items that have evolved side-by-side, one influencing the other. Nonprofits are seeing the value in smartphones and application based fundraising more than ever and are beginning to embrace the technology. What lacks today is not the technology, but the availability of effective tools which allow individuals to connect to an organization. There is a need to reduce the amount of virtual noise and create a direct point of contact where a donor can discover, support and engage with the nonprofit of their choosing. With a streamlined mobile application, it is possible to make such interactions available to all. This would no longer require individuals to have knowledge of a nonprofit before deciding to make a gift as the application would be supportive of charities by category and not by brand. This means it is also possible to truly understand the social impact of an organization and avoid the marketing buzz and glitz that can often distract from issues within an organization.

Through the process of researching and prototyping the application it is possible to begin to answer the original research questions.

Primary Research Question:

Can a mobile application provide interested parties transparent nonprofit financial information and allow them to make a personal contribution?

Simply stated: Yes. [Im:Pact](#) makes it possible for the individual, with or without prior knowledge of a nonprofit, the ability to contribute. This can be done through the volunteering of time, by selecting available volunteer positions, the contribution of money, or through the donation of a Facebook status to assist the organization in disseminating messages. Through the use of third party, impartial data, available to the public through Guidestar, it is possible to display the annual reports, IRS documents and employee spending within the application. Making it possible for the individual to have a deep understanding of how an organization is utilizing their funds raised before making a contribution.

Secondary Research Questions:

1. How can Human Centered Design principals influence and direct user flow?

Human Centered Design impacts the overall architecture of the application. In the instance of [Im:Pact](#) there is a use of white space to highlight the actions on each screen. Blue and green buttons are used to indication actions and assist the user in completing the goal of a contribution. The overall structure of the application is designed to always drive the user towards the end goal of a contribution, green buttons, placed within all pages of static information to drive the user back to action screens. Green is a color which denotes positive feelings and a sense of calm. This is used to support the user in feeling confident about making a commitment to an organization via the application. The application itself drives to be informational in an effort to engage the individual and help them feel a sense of purpose in completing the applications goals. This is in unison with the simplicity of the overall design to ensure the application is intuitive and user-friendly.

2. Is it possible to illustrate an organization's mission and community impact through a mobile application?

It is possible to illustrate the organizations mission by clearly displaying the mission statement and organizational data as it relates to the spending of funds raised on staff and investments into the reported goals and mission. Nonprofits are required to disclose their financials to the IRS and this is publicly available through a third-party nonprofit, Guidestar. This information can be viewed at any time and is always up-to-date with information within the last two fiscal years. Individuals can view highlighted financial information directly through the [Im:Pact](#) application, or by clicking the Guidestar link within the information pages and delving deeper through the web browser.

3. Can user data be tracked and reported to demonstrate the applications successful implementation?

Google Analytics provides free website and mobile application tracking and reporting. It is possible to report the number of users, new and returning, the number of application page views, goal completion clickthroughs and page drop-offs. The available information can go as far as to inform as to what zip code, city, state or country the user is accessing the application from and the amount of time invested during a single visit. This information may be harvested to improve application performance, expand upon the current pages, develop additional pages and even add new functionality to improve goal completion and reduce the number of drop-offs.

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