Initial Plan

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"Twitter-style" App for Group Communication

Supervisors
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Project Description

The aim of this project is to allow communication to groups of individuals that share something in common, in an anonymous fashion. Communication can be taken place locally or nationwide. The objective is to design a central system that will transmit incoming messages through a Twitter-Style switchboard distributing their messages to the recipients hiding their identity from their recipients. Recipients will then be able to respond if they so wish. Such a system will encourage communication between group members and potentially return an insight to unspoken feelings. End users will optionally sign up for the service via direct communication to a representative of the system, to ensure security. The system will use SMS for data transmission to offer cheaper access to the service rather than using data rates.

The system could be mapped to any large grouping; take this first use case as an example; a Patient-to-Patient group; communicating to help support each other. Patients are grouped together according to their situation: illness and past illnesses. Conversations will help others understand someone else is or has gone through the same problem. Hopefully boosting patient morale. The conversations will allow clinicians (observers) to view them and intervene, to make adjustments in their methods to improve service.

The system could be mapped to a school creating groups for each course, allowing students to pass their views and opinions on lecturers, module content, module structure, coursework, etc. Again observers of the system would then be able to view conversations and make adjustments to the course.

Essential Requirements

- The capability to communicate anonymous.
- Basic entry to the system via SMS, allowing any mobile device to use the system.
- Closed system; that requires approval by the system administrator in order to gain access.
    - Create a way in which administrators can add contacts and remove contacts.
    - Contacts will be identifiable by the system, but id will be private to other contacts of the system.
    - If misuse is reported or discovered, a log will be required to track back, identifying the sender; only accessible by the administrator.
- A form of public display board that will display activity, helping to encourage users in participating.

Additional Requirements

The essential requirements will be used to create a basic anonymous communication application for groups of people. A prototype will be created and used with test subjects, collecting feedback about the system. The feedback from users and behaviour found in messages will be used to highlight areas of improvement. For example many users may find anonymous communication effective. On the other hand users may find the need for pseudonymous functionality, to allow more effective communication to specific individuals. Users may like the public display; therefore more additional requirements will be placed into producing more visual activities for the display.

Reports

The interim report will contain documentation regarding research gathered upon current systems and first prototype deliverable; the information will help with decisions in the following stages of the project. The final report will cover the decisions based upon the research gathered in the interim report; then progressing onto designs of the final system.

Personal achievements

I aim to increase my knowledge of current technologies and public API's; which will then become transferrable to other future projects. I also aim to increase my communication skills in formal writing, meetings and presentations. The project is large and requires lots of planning and documentation to keep track of its progress; this project will increase my skills in these areas.

Work Plan

This project will follow a spiral approach allowing iterations throughout the project lifecycle; allowing alterations throughout. I aim before the end of semester to have completed one cycle, producing a prototype that will then be adapted and brought into the next phase of the project creating a second final prototype.

Supervisor meetings will take place every two weeks; work will be presented or reported to the supervisors; if required meetings will be scheduled with a single week interval.

WK3 – 16/10/11 – Initial report deadline

WK4 – Bring forward a summary report, discussing current systems, services and products that could be used to implement the system.

WK6 – Report progress on first prototype system.

WK8 – Report on first prototype system, demonstration.

WK10 – Show current progress on interim report.

WK11 – 16/12/11 Interim report deadline

Christmas Recess
Work will be continued over recess, although revision will be on higher priority.

WK2 – Potentially create dummy run of the system, start collecting data and analyzing.

WK4 – Begin second iteration, Show results from dummy run.

WK6 – Report progress on final prototype system.

Wk8 – Show final prototype.

Wk10 – Report progress on final report.

WK12 – Report progress on final report. Show amendments from previous draft.

WK13 – Proof second draft

Hand in final report 04/05/12

Attend Viva