

Initial Plan: Beyond Words App

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Project Description

Beyond words are a community company who host a performance around the UK. The performances are done by the disadvantaged communities around the area in which Beyond works is going to at the time. Within this performance there is a choir a one thousand young people ranging between the ages of 8 and 23.

The choir are a close-knit group when they are performing, but as soon as they step off that stage, there is no way for them to stay in contact with one another. This is where I come in, I will be looking to create an application that will only be available to the choir members in which they will be able to use to stay in contact when the performance is over, along with keeping them all updated on when Beyond Words will be coming back to their area.

The app will be targeted and the children and teens between the ages of 8 and 16. Because of the delicate ages, we will need to make sure that safety and safeguarding is at its peak within the application to keep all the users safe. This will mean, we will be looking to take as little information about the users of the app as possible along with making sure that the security is unbreachable by others outside of the choir.

One of the main speaking points of Beyond Words is inclusion. Within this app we will need to make sure that it is inclusive and is able to have all cultures learn about one another and share with one another in an area they are all going to feel accepted.

We will need to make sure that this application has enough going on to keep all the users engaged and using the app to keep in contact. To do this there will be scheduled updates, for those who like to keep up to date on what is going on within the company. There will be challenges hosted on a regular basis with the winners getting prizes and many other features.

As Beyond Words do not like the thought of children and teens on their phones as much as most are these days, we will also be coming up with a solution to this where they users will be using the app and then going to interact with the real world, this would be able to be done through things such as the challenges that will be set, but we will also be looking at other more permanent systems that we could add within the app that users will enjoy on a regular basis.

Along with this application having all the fun aspects within it such as a challenge and comedy page there are also some serious matters that this application will need to address. Through the time of COVID, research shows that there has been an 80% increase in referrals of child abuse (Ref1), and anything we are able to do to help fight against this will be good. This means that the app is going to need a section where users can get in contact in the way they feel most comfortable and reach out for help, without this being recorded locally for them as this could lead to an abuser seeing that they are reaching for help. This will need to be both confidential and closely monitored to prevent as much harm to a child as possible.

Within all the different locations that Beyond Words goes, there are around 6200 children and teens that would be potentially using this application and growing. This means, we will need to make sure that this app will be able to handle a large number of users all at the same time and future proof as this is just the numbers we will be starting with.

Project Aims and Objectives

Aim

The main aim of this project is to create an application so that the choir of Beyond Words will stay connected when they are not on the stage, along with being exclusive to the choir and as safe as possible with minimal monitoring.

Objectives

The first objective we are going to need to look at will be researching a good platform for making an application. There are many out there such as Thunkable and Android Studio, I will just need to see which one I find the easiest to use and has the features required to carry out this project.

Next, I will need to research an app design software that I will be able to use to make a concept that I will be able to work to, this will help as it means I will not be needing to both create the app and think about design options all at the same time as this can get very difficult. Along with this, changes being made on a design are easy where as changes made on a real app can mean you are deleting or modifying hours of work as it was not what the client wanted.

The last research that will be required will be researching what kids like within an app, what keeps them entertained, the colour themes they like and, how to make sure they keep using the app and do not get bored.

After all of the research is complete a design of the app will need to be created using the software chosen above, this will be the initial design that will be chopped and changed as needed so that it includes all criteria that the client wants.

When the initial app design is complete, a meeting will then need to be organised with the Beyond Words team, where the app design will be presented to them and feedback will be given on what they want to keep, what they want changed, and how they want it changed.

The app design will then be changed with all of the feedback given to make it as perfect for the client as possible along with still do able by me.

Have another meeting with the client with the revised app design to make sure that it is now correct as at this stage aspects of the app are easy to change where as if I start creating the app then changes are a lot more difficult to make.

Now that the design is all done and exactly what the client wants, Time to create a basic app that will function on a local level, with all of the design features but not all of the functionality, just to make sure that it all looks okay and works like it should. As I am learning how to create an app through this process, I will be starting with getting a basic design working and then upgrading from there as this is the way I like to learn.

Now that we have a basic working application it is time to upgrade. Now is time to have the app link to a database that will store all login's along with the content for the app as this will want to be dynamic for the easiest changes to be made by members of Beyond Words who are not that technical. The database will also be storing messages and feedback that choir members leave on the app for the Beyond Words team to see.

Another meeting will then take place, which will be to show the client the final product that has been created. As there is a short time frame this could include saying what is and isn't added within the app and if there is anymore time left for parts to be upgraded more.

Constraints

The main constraint that I am going to experience with this project will be the time that I have to create the app. The whole project is running for 12 weeks, research shows that (ref 2) app's take an average of 6 months to create and I have half that time and other work to do alongside this project. To mitigate this, I will need to make sure that I am keeping this in mind at every step and am not trying to make an application that is not within my timescale.

Another constraint is that this app is going to be a prototype that can then be fully fleshed out. What this means is, I need to make an app that can be passed off to another person, who will then be able to complete this. This is a constraint as when making the app, I will not need to just make an app I understand, but an app that is easy to understand for others to take over, this means everything will need to be documented for the next user to know my thoughts when designing or creating along with knowing what links where and why.

The app login is going to be pre-made accounts that user will be given to make sure that not non choir members are able to join the app. This means that I will be constrained on my creative freedom within the login page making sure that is it more functional over creative.

The app must have a messaging system where choir members are able to send messages to Beyond Words in case of emergency such as abuse. This means that when linking the database to have messaging and feedback, the messaging will have to be my biggest priority for if it takes long than expected.

The app must be inclusive to all cultures, this will constrain me to certain themes that will not exclude anyone, this could be difficult as I am only creating a small app and there are many aspects that will need adding.

My own experience is going to be a constraint within this project. I have no experience until this point in creating an app, this means that there are going to be many hurdles for me to overcome which will add to the time that the project will take me. This is a shame but as this is a prototype that an experienced app developer would then be taking over, if there is anything I get completely stuck on, this can be documented for the next person to add.

Within the time frame that I have for this project, I will not be able to have this app tested by the choir members to gain feedback to polish the app. This means that everything I am doing will theoretically work, but when the app has thousands of users is when we will really see if it keeps up.

The last constraint I will be talking about will be resource, this has many different aspects. Firstly, we have the limited resources where normally when students are doing a project like this, they will be able to go into the university and use the computers, have other students easily give them feedback mid creation, and many more. With COVID and lockdown, this will not be possible meaning all of my work will have to be done on my own computer which does not the software that the labs do, when I want quick feedback from a student, I need to go through the hassle of either streaming them the app or sending it to them and then having the user download the software needed to run the app in its development state. This is so much hassle that many people will not do this for me meaning there is less feedback from peers which is a massive disadvantage. Another constraint there is when it comes to resources is, I am not working for a company that would be able to fund all of the software needed to make the best product, fund a test server for me to get the app live and tested. This would help with the speed of creation and the quality of the app, but I will just have to keep this in mind and find ways around such as free software and local hosting of the app to test it.

Work Plan

Week	Date (2021)	Task	Task Documentation
1	01 st Feb – 08 th Feb	Initial Plan	The initial Plan will be a document covering an overview of the project, the work plan, risk assessment, the constraints of the project and, aims and objectives
2	08 th Feb – 15 th Feb	Research	The research document will be a document made to record all of my findings when researching all 3 different aspects of this project, the app design program, the app creator program and research into how the app should look and feel to keep kids interacting with it.
3	15 th Feb – 22 nd Feb	Design App	This will be the initial design of the app; this will be done on the platform that will be chosen within my research. I will also have a document alongside this explaining what went well and what was difficult within this experience.
4	22 nd Feb – 1st Mar	Meeting and app design modifications	In correspondence to the meeting, I will be taking minutes while it is going ahead, this will be notes on all key parts that will need to be remembered within the design remodelling and the application building process. I will then add the changed to the app design already created and add a list of modification from the initial app design to the documentation explain what went well and badly within the app design process.
5	1 st Mar – 8 th Mar	Meeting, app modifications and app development	After the app has been modified the first time there will be another short meeting to make sure everything is correct and otherwise will changes will be made, these will all be documented is the same way as week 4. The app development will then start and this will have its own documentation, there will be the app itself on the platform that I choose after research. Then there will also be a document that will explain how each part of the app was developed, what works, what doesn't work, and any other hurdles or notable experiences within this process.
6	8 th Mar – 15 th Mar	App design	The initial app design will continue here, where I will also continue to document the app the same as the week before.
7	15 th Mar – 22 nd Mar	App design	As this is my first app I will be creating, I will need more time than an experienced creator so this week again will be dedicated to the app and documenting as I go.

8	22 nd Mar – 29 th Mar	App upgrading	Here I will be upgrading the application from working on a basic local level to working with a database to have a login system. This will be documented within its own section about the login system, how I did it and what I found hard.
9	29 th Mar – 5 th Apr	App upgrading	This will be adding the dynamic content to the app where I will have the database automatically add content to the app to make it as easy as possible for staff to update the app and the choir members on anything events etc. This again will have its own section in the documentation where I will progressively explain my journey of creating this.
10	5 th Apr – 12 th Apr	App upgrading	This will be adding a system where the choir members using the app will be able to leave feedback that will be saved to the database and, message the Beyond Words team. This again will have its own section within the documentation where I explain how I did this and aspects that when both well and badly.
11	12 th Apr – 19 th Apr	Meeting and documentation merging/upgrading	This week I will have a meeting with the Beyond Words team presenting the app that I have created. This will then be documented with the other minutes from other meetings. This meeting may also have some immediate and final changes that are needed to the app before this project is complete. After this meeting, the week will be spent on merging all of the documentation that I have from this project into one document, within this week I will be upgrading what I have written by taking out any irrelevant information, adding any information I have forgotten, proof reading and spell checking.
12	19 th Apr – 26 th Apr	Clean up and putting app live.	This week will be for cleaning up all of the loose ends within the project, do any final touches Beyond Words would like, add then to the documentation before putting the app live for choir members to download and use after their first event where they will receive login details. My experience of this will then be documented and then the project will get submitted.

Risk Assessment

Risk	Probability (1 – 5) (Low – High)	Impact (1 – 5) (Low – High)	Mitigation
Computer breaks	1	5	To make sure this doesn't happen I will keep my computer in good condition.
Data is lost	1	5	To prevent this, my project will have 2 backups, one on the cloud and another on a separate backup hard drive.
Client stops communication	1	3	I will be well mannered and keep a stream of conversation so I would know if this happens as soon as possible.
Not enough time to learn how to make an app	3	3	Make sure I am using my time wisely, learning from good and efficient resources and not books with hundreds of pages for just one small aspect of the project.
I get sick	5	2	Keep a healthy lifestyle and when I am ill, make a working environment where I can work while resting.
Client and I cannot come to an agreement on app design	2	3	Be flexible and as the customer is always right.
Client wants a major change last minute.	2	2	At the beginning of the project, outline the timescale to the client so they know what I am working with.
Internet outage	1	3	Work as much offline as I can.
Power outage	1	2	Keep my laptop charged so that I will be able to do some

			work on that while I am waiting for the power to come back on.
Time loss due to moving and having to work.	3	3	Try and be ahead with work along with getting others to help me move so I can concentrate more on working.

References

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<https://3sidedcube.com/how-long-does-it-take-to-build-an-app/#:~:text=On%20average%2C%20apps%20can%20take,brief%3A%20one%20or%20two%20weeks> [Accessed: 08/02/2021]