

→ Pay it Forward! →

Weekly Newsletter #1 - January 20, 2012

Project Objective:

The stated goal of the Pay it Forward project is to create a game that embraces and promotes the Pay it Forward concept - the idea of performing random acts of kindness for others in the interest of encouraging recipients of such goodwill to do the same. In this way, giving, gratitude, and gladness are passed on exponentially from person to person.

Accomplishments:

In this initial week of work on this project, the team began to delve into the Pay it Forward concept, studying the project description, researching related endeavors in this area, and meeting with the project's client. On Monday, the team met for the first time, and members introduced themselves to one another. Everyone was very excited about this project from the start, and so some basic research was done to acquaint the team with the ideas at the core of this project.

A client meeting was set for Thursday, and the team held a handful of meetings before that point to discuss what had been found while researching, and to conceive a small array of potential directions that could be presented in the client meeting. In this time a collaborative tool set was established through Google docs, and meeting logistics with faculty advisers were resolved.

On Thursday, Mr. George Globe, CEO of the Linden Foundation visited the team for a meeting to exchange ideas and discuss the direction of the project. George's feedback was instrumental in refining the team's understanding of this project's goals, and the general feeling following the meeting was one of enthusiasm and encouragement.

Direction:

Key objectives for the project were emphasized in the meeting with George, giving the team a strong direction in which to direct design efforts. Crucial to the experience is that it is centered around real-world human interaction; a web portal or other technology may be used to enhance and gamify the experience, but the spirit of the Pay it Forward concept is performing spontaneous acts of goodwill in a real-world environment.

Additionally, a community aspect was stressed; in addition to establishing a grassroots community around the game, metrics of play may be community-oriented, and the game itself should be something that the community can sustain on its own, following the wiki model.

George also was a proponent of incorporating physical artifacts, such as cards, that serve as reminders of omnipresent opportunity. In this way, the recipient of a card should feel as though receiving an opportunity, not a burdensome responsibility. Players should be intrinsically motivated to pay it forward.

→ Pay it Forward! →

Weekly Newsletter #1 - January 20, 2012

Technologically, solutions for meeting the project's goals may likely involve augmented reality, a web portal, location tracking functionality, and network visibility drawing from the metaphor of a tree and the Google mechanic. A Web application would be a simple and easy way for players to participate in an online community, view their connections, manage game resources, and view the history of artifacts related to their acts of goodwill. An augmented reality component, such as QR codes, may be useful for providing players with a mobile method of obtaining instant feedback, as well as contributing geographical data to the experience. When online, the experience should relate the player to connections made between other players, deeds and artifacts, and geographic locations, allowing the player to view the effect and context of relevant actions taken in the game.

Related Work:

Points of reference for this project are games such as Akoha and Boom Boom, card games utilizing cards as physical representations of good deeds, incorporating point values, specific challenges, and codes corresponding to an online component. Karma Seed is a similar endeavor. Web sites such as Baidu and Mystery Seeker provided some inspiration in terms of the potential for requesting particular help among a community, and the exchange of random challenges between players. Drawing upon these sources for inspiration, the challenge will be to go beyond what has been done in a meaningful way, while meeting the primary project goals.

Moving Forward:

The goal for next week is to continue brainstorming, building off of what was discussed this week, ultimately deciding on one or a small group of game concepts that would be feasible for this team to complete in a semester and that would meet the project's goals. Additionally, the team expects to be establishing a web presence, name, and logo by the end of Week 2.

This concludes the news for the first week! Look for the Week 2 newsletter next Friday, January 27. This should be a great semester!
