

va 401 // project proposal

by // ezgi didem dađcı

sabancı university // fall '10

Project Denition

My project will be creating a website that aims to raise the awareness on social networking problems.

Conceptual Description

The website will be an informative, sampler one which will make people to be aware of the problems that can be faced during social networking. It basically aims to say stop to be aggrieved by social network misusers. The site will contain questionnaires, researches and evaluations regarding the misuse of social networking and will share related most common problems. In content- violation of user's data protection rights, privacy and state surveillance, identity fraud, online strangers and social phishing issues will be handled. The main point in this project is to give information in an impressive manner. To create a contrast with the 'visual' world of social network sites I prefer to use 'virtual audio' medium. Although there will be written information there will also be 'virtual audio recordings' instead of 'acted scenes' for each real cases regarding the results of faced problems.

Objectives & Goals

-Create / raise the awareness of the audience on social networking problems by creating an informative content and enriching it with related virtual audio recordings.

Informing people and giving message is the originating point of my project however it's obvious that all social projects aim the same. Thus to distinguish my project from the others, besides the written information such as academic researches, evaluations and press items I will provide an 'virtual audio recordings' that scenarize the actual cases about the topic.

Everyday we read about identity fraud and privacy surveillance problems which can be mostly faced in web 2.0 platforms. However we don't deliberate on what we read, by filling in the questionnaire about social network use of the audiences and listening audio samples, target audience will be more involved in the problem. They can face their own problems in the questionnaire and by the audio recordings they can imagine the actual cases in their minds and feel them virtually while listening it.

-The project will collect statistical data. It is important to see a statistical data to understand the seriousness of the problems in any case so that by filling in the questionnaire the site will make a data collection depending on multiple variables such as age and gender. This will function as a kind of cross-check process.

Target Audience

My target audience will be adult web 2.0 users who are interested in social networking. Actually I don't want to make a limitation on the age intervals but because it's going to be eerie in content and visualization somehow I want to direct it to an audience which is at the age of 16 at least.

Background Information

The point of origin in my project was basically my personal interest in social networking platforms where you can reach everywhere just in few seconds. While brainstorming I stuck on the idea of sharing negative aspects of social networking even though I've been an active user of such kind of sites for 3 years. I personally use those websites to communicate with my friends and to follow what's going on all over the world. It was just fun for me to share ideas when I just realized that social networking is much more than I've been using for. During the research period I read lots of academic reports, evaluations and cases about social networking and within

the all those resources I faced with common problems. If to categorize those, they are legal problems like; violation of user's data protection rights, privacy and state surveillance, identity fraud and social harassment. They are all wide headlines which necessitate to be expanded. Technology is slowly changing the way people and organisations relate to each other. It's obvious that more and more, the Internet may drive users' social life. In that case social networking in web 2.0 platforms is the most common way to achieve this. The specific technology that has enabled this growth in the number and popularity of social networking sites is part of a wider online phenomenon, enabling self-expression, communication and user interaction online, known as Web 2.0. This technology is not unique to social networking sites and has helped the development of other interactive applications such as user-generated content sites like YouTube, file-sharing sites and Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games such as Second Life, World of Warcraft and Runescape, all sites typical of Web 2.0. This kind of web-based platforms are much more interactive and operate on a personal rather than corporate level, and so bring with them a different set of risks. At the most basic level; social networking sites are sites which allow users to set up online profiles or personal homepages, and develop an online social network. The profile page functions as the user's own webpage and includes profile information ranging from their date of birth, gender, religion, politics and hometown, to their favourite films, books quotes and what they like doing in their spare time. In addition to profile information, users can design the appearance of their page, and add content such as photos, video clips and music files. Users are able to build a network of connections that they can display as a list of friends. These friends may be offline actual friends or acquaintances, or people they only know or have met online, and with whom they have no other link. It is important to note that the term 'friend', as used on a social networking

site, is different from the traditional meaning given to the term in the offline world.

In many ways the ideas behind social networking sites are not new. It has been possible since the early days of the internet to do many of the things which social networking site users do now, such as creating personal web pages and communicating with others through interfaces such as chat rooms, internet forums, message boards, web communities and blogs. Whereas social networking site profiles were previously simple and text-based, they can now support images, site customisation, audio and even video content. However the main difference between social networking sites and earlier forms of many-to-many conversations such as chat rooms and blogs is that social networking sites are predominantly based on social relationships and connections with people, rather than a shared interest. Online communication has changed from being merely task-based or for sharing information and is increasingly an end in itself.

The increasing popularity that the social networks have acquired in the recent times, have highlighted the legal problems posed in the obvious risk for the privacy and data protection rights. Although these networks give many benefits to users by facilitating communication between them and the exchange of any kind of information in real time, this social networks represents a serious threat to the privacy rights and their data protection or to third parties related to them (family, friends, etc.) because the data they dump on the social networks (contact information, photographs, videos, etc.) are accessible in a public and global way. So that they permit criminal or malicious activity in unexpected ways. As cited in CEPIS report for example; mobile phone technology provides easy and instant digital camera and video facilities, and this can be used maliciously. The filming of an assault and then posting the video on social networking sites is considered to enhance the image of the attacker (at least amongst

their peers) There have been cases of cyber bullying, misuse and corruption of personal information, the posting of material about an individual by third parties, often of a malicious nature, and publishing of material involving others, without their consent, which can be embarrassing or worse. Besides that, identity theft becomes easier if social networking sites can be mined to provide in-depth information on an individual.

Search engines are emerging, which specifically focus on collating personal information from social networking sites. (www.pipl.com for example) Within virtual reality sites as a member of social networks, various further issues arise. People have a strong bond with their avatar. Even if logically this is a game, events which happen to your avatar may affect you emotionally and this introduces issues such as emotional bullying through social network sites. There are also opportunities to apply behaviour analysis to the avatar of an individual, and this may be quite revealing.

Another major issue is the extent to which virtual reality sites allow an individual to screen their real identity. Whilst it allows you to hide behind a virtual identity, it also allows others to do the same, and this may be exploited. You can no longer believe what you see. People are usually trusting adults.

Real-life crime will inevitably intrude into virtual reality sites if they can. Second Life, for example, allows cash transactions using virtual Linden Dollars, which are negotiable currency and can be bought and sold in real life. Virtual goods can be bought and sold, and therefore theft, fraud, money-laundering etc. become possible. In virtual worlds people can meet and talk, and virtual meetings may be a way of keeping together groups of friends or business colleagues. This is also useful to international terrorist or criminal cells.

Social networking sites do carry a great deal of personal information, and the unwary or uninformed user may easily give away a great deal more information than they had intended. To cover all, it is possible to face with actual cases which are

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To cover all, it is possible to face with actual cases which are caused by misuse of social networking by the individuals themselves or the outsiders. Interpenetrating personal lives with virtual reality sites, unwelcome behaviour on the part of known friends or acquaintances and activities of outsiders hacking accounts or assuming false identities are the most seen cases that can be given as examples.

While searching for a model project I'm very much influenced by the idea of "DemoKino" website. DemoKino is a virtual parliament that through topical film parables provides the voters (participants) with the opportunity to decide on issues that are, paradoxically, becoming the essence of modern politics: the questions of life.

The project questions not only the utopia of contemporary virtual forum that is supposed to open ways for a more direct and influential participation but also points out a much deeper problem of modern democracy (virtual as well). With its reduced narrativeness - the story is built on the "pro and contra" inner dialogues of the protagonist who is led around his home in a parliamentary kind of way by the "voters", based on their decisions.

Demokino shows how these ethical dilemmas of modern life suddenly become the core of our political participation. Another sample for my project is the ZeroDB Project which is against the music torture. Their goal is to end the suffering caused by music torture. What impressed me a lot is the visual presentation of their content and their use of sound. I am influenced by the eerie atmosphere they created while deciding the identity of my website.

Detailed project description

The misuse of social networking is a widespread problem today which results in violation of user's data protection rights, privacy - state surveillance, identity fraud and social phishing kind of cases. The website basically aims to create awareness and say stop to be aggrieved by social network misusers with its informative and sampler content. Whole topic will be covered in **5** departments;

- Aim: *Short description of the purpose.*
- Social Networking Definition: *Historical background/Social Content/Use of Sample Platforms*
- Research: *Related academic papers/Reports/Evaluations/Statistics*
- Real Cases: *Records of cases / virtual audio recordings - vocalized scenarios*
- Questionnaire: *asking about the users' habits and their use of social network.*

My project will function as an informative website covering a social content : Social Networking Problems. They are;

- Spam
- Social/psychological problems; where virtual becomes real
- Identity theft
- Harrasment
- Corporate espionage
- Dismissal because of social network statuses
- Social phishing
- Communication medium for terrorist organizations
- Intervention in private life

One of the most important thing about mywebsite is the audio-visual presentation, it will be; eerie, suffocating, disturbing (to emphasis on the seriousness of the problem)

Scope of The Project

My website project **will** ,

- be informative,
- concern to social background,
- create / raise the awareness of the audience on social networking problems,
- help people emphasize,
- collect statistical data,

But **will not**,

- offer solution to the problem,
- defame social networking sites,
- strive for ban of social networking,
- give a handle for gibe of the problems.

Required know-how and resources:

Softwares-Hardwares needed to be known

- Adobe Flash(for audio embedding)
- Adobe Dreamweaver
- Binaural Dummy-Head (binaural microphone headset)

Needed Resources

-Reports/Academic Papers/Evaluations/Statistical data/Records of cases regard to social networking problems
-questionnaire- needed to be prepared to collect data on use of social networking (will be asked to a group of people before the website starts functioning and then it will be published on-line.Hence audiences who ll the questionnaire on website can make cross-check of the results)

for the audio recordings (auditory illusion)

- a sound studio should be booked
- sound performers should be decided for vocalization
- sound libraries should be searched
- if suitable sound effects should be collected
- binaural dummy head should be provided (binaural microphone headset)

Difculties & Risks

- The learning process of softwares is going to be the main difculty for me because I don't know anything about codeing at all. (I just have a bit proccessing experience)
- I can encounter difculties during the period of obtaining permission to publish concerned reports,papers and evaluations.
- My website will be devoid of visuals. Instead, it will include written information and audio recordings. The difculty is to catch attendance of the audience by those messages and audios without being boring.
- I can have problems during sound recording period. The accents and sounds are very important to be realistic. The problem is to absent from the real sense of cases if they're not vocalized well.
- The website can be disapproved by social network platforms,they can think that my website is agains the social

networking.

-The content and the visualization(I mean the sounds and transitions) are going to be eerie and can be improper for children.

Criteria of Success

Phases that will be completed by the end of this term

- the website will be constituted in basic form (not the whole design)
- data collection will be completed
- the 10 problems will be decided and researches of archives will be started.
- one scenerio sample and one audio recording will be prepared

The criteria to judge the success of the project

- if you feel suffocated, disturbed by the visualization which are the sounds, transitions between given information and the virtual audio recordings
- if the audio recordings can give you the reality sense
- if you understand the seriousness of the problem without making fun of it, if you can emphatize and react to the case
- if you can cross check your problems with the results of the questionnaire and see if your problem is already there, then the project reaches its aim.

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Documentation

- work breakdown structure
- pert chart
- gannt chart
- flow chart

Work Breakdown Structure

- Domain alımı
- Social research
- Software öğrenimi
- Project name-logo
- Site map decision
- Visual language
- Questionnaire creation
- Virtual audio recording
- Database design
- Interface design
- Dreamweaver-Flash
- Audio decision (background)

I wrote all of the steps I could think of on Post-it's and stuck them on the whiteboard

pert chart

I organized the list under two main titles as visible and invisible works.

Invisible

Technique

- Domain allmi
- Site map decision
- Dreamweaver-Flash
- Database design

Research

- Social research; reports,evaluations,academic papers archive search (newspapers,channels..)
- Visual elements decision: color, font, data design, audio back
- Questionnaire creation

- Software öğrenimi
- Virtual audio recording technique

Visible

- Project name-logo
- Interface design
- visual language (color, font, transitions)
- pop-up (questionnaire)
- audio options

flow chart



