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HCDE 518B Autumn 2013

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P1: Project Declaration

Team Name

Pouncing Paws

Project Title

Watchdog Pet Care

Project Tagline

"A happy pet is a happy you."

Team Members & Roles

In planning our project, we have identified roles and phases that we would each like to lead. While we will all be contributing to each part of the project, one person will act as the lead for that portion and will act as a project manager, organizing the team and setting the agenda. We believe this will give us each experience across a number of tasks, but will leave us with an authoritative lead to fall back on when we are uncertain about what to do. Our tentative assignments follow:

Jeremy

Jeremy will take the lead role in user research and organization of the class presentation. He is also interested in taking on a supportive role in graphics and visuals, as he would especially like to work on those skills.

Sagrie

Sagrie will be leading the evaluation of our prototype and the creation of our specification document.

Heidi

Heidi will lead the creation of personas and scenarios, as well as the ideation and visual phases of the project.

Matt

Matt will lead the user experience and interaction design phases of the project, as well as the prototype development.

Project Description

Based on our own experiential and anecdotal evidence, we believe that there are at least three primary reasons why pet owners are not able to provide the best care for their animals. First, most pet owners cannot be near their pets at all times and are therefore unable to continually monitor their pets. Second, pet owners may lack the knowledge to identify or appropriately monitor inadequacies in their care for their pets. Third, even if they can identify better care methods, pet owners may be unable to realistically provide what the pets need. We intend to investigate the hardships and difficulties that each reason creates, as well as search for additional reasons that pets do not receive optimal care.

We will attempt to engage pet owners who are both successful and unsuccessful in properly caring for their pets in order to identify effective strategies and common problem areas, respectively. Through our research and ideation, we aim to find ways to ease the difficulties created by the deficiencies outlined above. At the end of our project, we will produce a prototype of a system that supports and encourages effective strategies for pet owners and will conduct initial evaluations to determine the validity of our initial efforts.

Design Question

How can we give pet owners new tools to become better “pet parents?”

Research Questions

How do owners currently manage their animals health and well-being?

How do pet owners validate their current strategy for effective pet ownership/care?

How do owners monitor their pets well-being while away (including both short-term and long-term)?

How do pet owners share pet care responsibilities with co-owners?

What effect does caring for a pet have on an owner’s own life? (time, finance, stress, etc)

Target Users

For our project, we intend to start broadly by targeting pet owners in general. We will try to include a number of types of pet owners, such as: working professionals, homemakers, couples, singles, families, people with disabilities, college students, and retirees. Through our initial, widely distributed survey, we will identify patterns in our users and narrow our focus.

For additional insight, we will also try to talk to professionals in animal care, particularly veterinarians, so that we can hear their opinions of what pet owners need to know.