Villagers

"It takes one to know one!"

Brent Ferreira and Julie Patterson
IS 282: Principles of System Analysis and Design
June 11, 2013
"Technology celebrates connectedness, but encourages retreat....The problem with accepting diminished substitutes [for face-to-face communication] is that over time, we, too, become diminished substitutes.

- Jonathan Safran Foer, "How Not To Be Alone," NYT, June 8, 2013
Villagers
It takes one to know one!
Brainstorming / Methodology

Grouper Social Club

Emphasis on Grouping / Small Networks

Groups Identified by Location

We set up drinks between 2 groups of friends. 3 on 3.
Social Network tethered to physical locations. Potential matches are presented according to user's locale.
The Internet of Things
How neighbors are sharing today

http://www.sonomahealthaction.org/images/home5.jpg
Sat Jun 08

★ PROCTOR - SILEX COFFEEMAKER - $19 (SM-90405) pic map appliances - by owner

★ Magic Chef Mini Fridge - $80 (hermosa beach) pic appliances - by owner

★ Frigidaire dishwasher portable or not - $50 (San Pedro) pic appliances - by owner

★ Antique white washer - $99 pic map appliances - by owner

★ Whirlpool gold dryer - $80 (San Pedro) pic appliances - by owner

★ Collapsible Magnetic Drying Shelf - $12 (West Hollywood) pic appliances - by owner

★ HealthMaster Blender - $99 (LAX) appliances - by owner

★ NORELCO HAIR SHAVER, TRIMMER AND NOSE TRIMMER - $15 (WLA, 90064, RANCHO PARK) pic appliances - by owner
NextDoor

Useful
The easiest way to keep up with everything in your neighborhood.

Private
A private environment designed just for you and your neighbors.

Proven
Over 13,000 neighborhoods across the U.S. rely on Nextdoor.

When neighbors start talking, good things happen.

Build a stronger neighborhood
Connect with your neighbors to stay informed and share useful local information.

Keep the neighborhood safe
Look out for each other and send updates to keep the neighborhood safe.

Share goods and recommendations
Find a great babysitter or trusty dentist. Borrow a ladder or sell that old bookcase.

SEE A NEIGHBORHOOD IN ACTION
NeighborGoods

Save money and resources by sharing stuff with your friends

Wendy is sharing her ladder with Jason

Jason is borrowing Wendy’s ladder

3509 people are sharing 2484 items near Los Angeles, CA.
Bright Neighbor pioneered the peer-to-peer sharing economy. We connect people at the hyper-local level for fast, trustworthy, and easy exchanges. With our new mobile app, Bright Neighbors can now rent, sell, lend, and barter, all in a single app.

Since no one likes having their stuff broken, you can rent or lend out your things while protecting them with a deposit from the borrower. You can also sell items and services, receiving electronic payments. Bartering items and services is free of charge. Member and item reviews help you make informed decisions when renting, selling, lending, or bartering with your neighbors!

Request A Beta Invitation

Send me an invitation
Villagers - Prototype

- desktop and mobile wireframes
- display functionality
- demonstrate user flow

Desktop Prototype

- Profile
- Registration
- Search
- Messaging/Trading
goodneighbor18
1.3 miles away

- has shared 4 items
- has borrowed 8 items
- has worked on 3 projects
- has 3 open projects

My wife and I love to do DIY projects around the house, but we don't have the budget for all the tools we need. Looking to meet some nice people from the neighborhood and help them out with home improvement projects in exchange for lending us some specialty tools.

say hello!
Welcome, Villager!

Villagers is a social networking site and tool and appliance sharing platform that aims to reverse the belief that technology has destroyed the idea of community. Rather than connecting people across long distances, we hope to provide our users with a deeper sense of community and strong ties to their immediate neighborhood through sharing typical home appliances just like they did before any of this new-fangled highfalutin technology came along. Join us and meet your neighbors!

Introduce yourself to the neighbors

What should we call you? [pick a username]

password: [text field]
confirm password: [text field]

Home Address:
Note: We will never share your address with another user. Read more in our privacy policy.
Street [text field]
City [text field]
State [text field]

Zip Code: [text field]

What do you hope to get out of Villagers? This will be displayed on your public profile.

Registration:
Step One
Step Two: Payment

In order to guarantee the security of our customers and verify the commitment of new members, we require a one-time registration fee of $14.95 upon signing up for Villagers. We will not save your billing information, and you will only be charged this one-time fee before enjoying indefinite free use of Villagers.

Billing Information

Credit Card Type: Visa
Credit Card Number: 
Expiration Date: Jan 2013
Verification Code: What's this?
Billing Address: Street
City
State
Zip Code: 

next >
Step Three: Inventory and Projects

This is where you let us know what you have that you're willing to share with your neighbors. It's also where you can list any DIY projects you'd like some help with, so that your friendly neighbors can return your favors with payment in kind. Don't worry if you can't think of much to start with - you can always come back and edit this page later.

Inventory: What I'll Share

Add Item

- Lawn & Garden
- Electric Tools
- Lawnmower

+ Add Another Item

My Projects

Space: Bathroom

Anticipated hours of labor: 0-5

Skill Level: No Special Skills Required

Intensity of Work: Moderate

Describe the project:

+ Add Another Project
Welcome to the neighborhood!

Congratulations on completing your account with Villagers! Here’s a bit more information to help you get started:

Probationary Period

For now, you are considered a probationary member. In order to gain full member status and enjoy full access to sharing in your neighborhood, we ask that you lend one item before you borrow. This helps to establish your credibility and indicate to your neighbors that you are committed to your Village. Once you’ve done so, we will remove the probationary badge from your member profile.

Using the site

At Villagers, we strive to maintain both transparency in information and privacy for our users. This means having to strike a balance between providing enough information about our users to help others establish their trustworthiness while not providing so much information that we violate the trust our users have placed in us by providing us with their information. So while we won’t give out addresses or item inventories for our users, we do have a system in place for verifying credibility.

For any user you are considering borrowing from or lending to, you can view how many items they have borrowed and returned, as well as how many items they have loaned out. This data is tracked using the mobile app on your smartphone, which you can link with the wireless network output of whatever item you’re borrowing. We leverage the network power of the Internet of Things to help back up the security of the contract you enter into with your fellow Villagers when borrowing and loaning items. The device will be linked to your smartphone, which will update your profile as you borrow and return items. See our FAQ for more information on how we’ve integrated the Internet of Things into our site.

Get Started!

If you haven’t added any items to your inventory, do so here.

Then check out the swap/meet to search for items you’d like to borrow and neighbors you’d like to meet! The Village awaits!
Welcome to the swap/meet!

Use the search box to find a specific item you're looking for, or browse our categories to discover what you don't know you need!

Search

What do you need today?

Browse by category:

Kitchen
- Appliances
- Tools
- Dishware & Cutlery
- Food Goods

Lawn & Garden
- Electric Tools
- Manual Tools

Garage
- Power Tools
- Manual Tools
- Multi-purpose

Storage Space
Good news, villager! 6 of your neighbors can lend a helping hand

or search again to meet more of your neighbors!

- username1: .3 miles away
- username2: .7 miles away
- username3: 1.3 miles away
- username4: 1.9 miles away
- username5: 2.6 miles away
- username6: 3.2 miles away
Viewing conversation between you and dwight27.

dwight27 said:

Howdy, neighbor! I see you have a lawn mower. We just moved here from an apartment and don’t have any tools yet. Mind if I borrow it?

jbbajabba said:

Sure! I’m available today after 3 if you’d like to stop by.

dwight27 said:

Absolutely! Thank you! I’ll be there at 3:30. What’s your address?

reply:

Sounds good! We live at 325 Golden Gate Way. I’m attaching a contract so we’re all squared away when you get here!
New Contract

June 11, 2023

Contract between you and dwight27.

I, jibbajabba, agree to lend my Lawnmower conditionally to my neighbor, dwight27. I understand that in completing this transaction I assume full liability for anything which might happen to this item or any other property of mine. I understand that Villagers is not responsible for any theft, damage, or injury that may occur as a result of using this service.

I hereby promise to carry out this transaction in good faith, lending items, storage space, my labor, or any other entity available for trading for the benefit of my neighbors, and will not abuse the Villagers site or any of its members.

Type your full name here to sign:

sign and send
The Swap/Meet > My Swaps > My Loans

Items I've Loaned

This is a history of items you've loaned, including items currently out for loan.

Items will automatically be marked as returned when the borrower's mobile app unsyncs with the connected device they have borrowed upon returning it. If for some reason a device is not connected, you can close the transaction manually using the drop-down menu.

You can also ask the borrower to return the item if you need it back, or report an item as stolen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>User</th>
<th>Date Loaned</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawnmower</td>
<td>dwight27.</td>
<td>June 11, 2023</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Juicer</td>
<td>Naybur12</td>
<td>June 2, 2023</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Ladder</td>
<td>Marathoner_32</td>
<td>May 28, 2023</td>
<td>Returned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Saw</td>
<td>coffee_addict22</td>
<td>April 20, 2023</td>
<td>Returned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage: Garage</td>
<td>meowmeowmeow.</td>
<td>October 15, 2022</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action for Selected Items

- Request Return
- Report
- Close Transaction (Returned)
Mobile Prototype

- Probationary Period
- Home
- Maps/Location
- Inventory
- Borrowed Items
- Loaned Items

So ... You Want to be a Villager? Yes! Welcome! There's just one thing you need to do first.

Something like 'Give and You Shall Recieve'. Before you ask to borrow something, we'd like you to share an item with a needy Villager.
Homescreen
Maps / Location
Inventory
Borrowed Items
Loaned Items
Deliverables

- {description of resources shared}

- White Paper: Leveraging the Internet of Things and "dumb" devices as trust credentials in resource-sharing systems

- {Trends analysis}

- Village.rs Privacy Policy

Where Have All The Neighbors Gone
by Wendy Miller

Last week, Xbox One, the latest incarnation of Microsoft’s gaming console, was unveiled to an excited audience of industry insiders and devoted gamers. But all I felt was fatigue. It seems every conference or presentation I attended hinges on the latest, greatest piece of technology that will help me connect with other people, the “social” aspect. But anytime I look around during a presentation or meeting, my colleagues and friends are exclusively interested in their screens. Even at lunch, most of us attempt to make conversation here and there, but our primary focus is on our phones. Where is the monumental platform or device that will unite us? Because it seems to me that with every new update, we only isolate ourselves from others.

If we aren’t forced to get to know someone, a fellow colleague, your wife’s friend, etc., why should we? Its true, never before have we’ve been able to reach so many people simultaneously at what seems to be an ever faster speed, seemingly rivaling real-time communication. But at the same time, as we rely on our digital networks more and more, what happens when we run out of soap or get a flat tire? Its human nature to rely on those around you in time of need. Hell, its human nature to want to have a beer with your neighbor on the weekend. But as we speed towards our supposedly hyper-connected future, I fear that few of these relationships will begin. Even as so many of us, Angelinos especially, identify ourselves by the neighborhoods we live in, how many of us know our neighbors or better yet, would befriend them?

It isn’t difficult to imagine a world where all our interactions are siphooned through some network. By network, I don’t mean something that would have kept Orwell up at night. Between my Facebook page and every other application that seems so easily integrated, I feel less and less interested in face to face interactions. Why try and interact with someone in the real world? On Facebook, I can interact with everyone I know at the same time. Of course, this is an exaggeration. Certain interactions are predicated by having at least two human bodies in the same physical space at the same time. But with every new revolutionary IT breakthrough, the number of these physical interactions will continue to decrease.

What happens on Saturday night when my wife is baking a cake and realizes she doesn’t have any sugar? The obvious answer is she goes to the store. But when it happened, I thought about what my mother would do in the face of similar cooking crises. She didn’t go the store; And she didn’t ask my father to pick some up on his way home. Instead, She’d coolly walk about ten yards across the street and ask our neighbor, Sue, if she could borrow some. It dawned on me then that these kind of interactions have become increasingly rare. My wife and I live in apartment complex and aside from our roommate, we have no daily or semi-daily interaction with any other tenant. What’s the point? All our friends are at our beck and call; twenty-four seven.
White Paper: Leveraging the Internet of Things and "dumb" devices as trust credentials in resource-sharing systems

Problem: Establishing Trust and Verifying Credibility in Resource-Sharing Systems (continued)

To summarize, the likelihood that an individual will use a resource-sharing system is directly related to the degree to which they feel that they can trust both the sharing platform itself as well as the other users involved in the system. As the realm of privacy shrinks further with the introduction of new technology each passing year, users are increasingly reluctant to share personal information with websites and applications. Their hesitation is augmented with the addition of another level of potential abuse of that information: other users who may take advantage of that information and whose trustworthiness cannot be immediately known simply by glancing at their profile or engaging them in conversation. This fear discourages participation in the network and thereby inhibits the network effects which bring applications their success. Social networks have the potential to be larger and stronger if they can establish a means of trust between the user and the system and amongst users.

Solution: Leveraging the Connectivity of Dumb Devices to Establish and Build Credibility

Thanks to the rise of the "dumb" computer, it is now possible to connect almost any object to the Internet of Things. It is called "dumb" because this small device merely collects and receives information, leaving the processing to be done in the cloud. Without the need for a processor in the device, it can be very small and made very cheaply, allowing it to be deployed across a whole host of new objects at a very low cost. In the past, this feature has typically been utilized to help individuals locate objects if they have been lost, track objects if they have been stolen, and monitor the status of objects which require maintenance, such as the oil levels in a car or the battery life of a fire detector.

"Dumb" devices connected to the Internet of Things allow for open-ended design, because the network itself is open-ended. On one end is the dumb device, which transfers and receives data through the cloud, where processing occurs. But there is no protocol for where the data goes or what is done with it once it leaves the cloud. Software developers, therefore, can use the Internet of Things as a platform for experimentation and innovation.

One such example of a novel way of leveraging the Internet of Things is by using an application to exchange data with dumb devices, tethering the device to the application. The data transfer is not interrupted, so the typical operation of any Internet-of-Things-connected device is not impeded. The application, best suited for use in the mobile context, simply registers itself with the device. This is useful when the owner of the application is not the owner of the device, as the registration serves as a documentation of an exchange. Thus individuals who are not acquainted and would normally have no legitimate reason to trust one another can use the application as a sort of contract, guaranteeing that any goods exchanged will be returned, for if not, legal recourse is an extremely viable alternative because the object in question will be linked with the borrower’s mobile phone thanks to its being connected to the Internet of Things.

Implementation: Protocols for Registration

The next issue in establishing trust credentials is developing standards for use.
Preliminary Workshop / VILLAGER

SUMMARY / Meeting between directors Brent Ferreira and Julie Patterson regarding brainstorm and speculative design for VILLAGER platform. 10 Am - 11Am.

MINUTES /

10:03 | Attendance. Brent Ferreira / Julie Patterson.
10:05 | General discussion about social networks. Brent points out recent op-ed in the LA Times. Both discuss the failure of social networks to connect people in the real world.
10:10 | Brent talks about his college thesis about how online networks act in many the same ways as tribes.
10:16 | Brent brainstorms the “VILLAGER” idea. Julie: “How can we use the web to get people to share / interact in the real world?”
10:19 | Both discuss taxonomy in relation to household items. Dividing locations in the house as areas that require different kinds of sharing.
10:24 | Trust is decided to be a vital issue for an application. How to build trust. Brent propose the idea of having new users share an item before they ask other “villagers” to borrow. Julie proposes a one-time fee.
10:30 | Neighborhoods. Both agree the platform should be used to connect people in close proximity to one another. They discuss imposing a limit to the number of a people in each village. A distance limit is also proposed.
10:40 | Julie sketches some speculative designs.
10:45 | Both brainstorm ideas about logo and branding.
10:50 | Wrap-up. Next meeting decided to commence at the same time, Thursday, March 18th. Decided deliverables for next meeting: desktop prototypes (Julie) / mobile wireframes (Brent) / Logo Sketches (Both). Both also agree to test some preliminary copy for homescreen / registration screen.
11:04 | Meeting adjourned.
Privacy Policy

Villagers is founded on one core belief: that in a world increasingly connected by technology, where more and more information is available and accessible, and where traditional notions of privacy and trust are constantly being challenged, the tight-knit neighborhood community is not dead. We utilize current technology not to strengthen bonds with remote others, but to reawaken the long languishing connections between neighbors and community members. Technology does not have to be impersonal; it affords us a means of establishing deep connections both online and in person. We understand how important your privacy is to you, and we are also aware that security and privacy are more important—and harder to guarantee—than ever. As such, we have drafted a rigorous privacy policy that, through a policy of respect for privacy, verification of identity, and establishment of trust credentials, will provide our users with the security they want and need.

Your Information

The information you share with Villagers is completely private. It is used only to improve your experience and help connect you to people in your community. We do not share any of your information with others or third parties. In fact, we don’t even look at it ourselves. Personal data such as username, address, and tool inventory is accessed exclusively by our system to help you search and share with others; no human may have access to your data.

Identity Verification

Villagers is formed around real-life communities, so we believe in providing you and other Villagers with the security of being certain that other users are indeed part of the community to which they claim to belong. We can provide this guarantee through address verification. Once you provide us with your home address upon registering, we will mail you a code via US Postal Service containing a confirmation code, which you will use to verify your account and gain full access to the Villagers community. This form of verification allows you to be certain that anyone listed as being a part of your community is in fact a neighbor with whom you can safely share goods, services, and a laugh or two.

Trust Credentials

"Trust credentials" are essentially a digital means of guaranteeing that the person with whom you are exchanging goods or services on Villagers is someone you can trust before you’ve even met them. We have provided a means of establishing these credentials by leveraging the connectivity of the internet of things. Most household devices can or will be connected to the Internet of Things. When goods are exchanged between neighbors, the borrower simply uses their app to register their account with the object being borrowed. This is something like entering a contract, with your smart phone as the witness! The app tracks when the device was borrowed, how long it was in the borrower’s possession, and when it was returned, leaving a digital trail of usage that is linked with the user’s profile. This means that for every Villager you can see how long whatever you lend is likely to be out for, and how certain you can be that it will be returned before you even agree to lend anything out. Eventually you should be able to verify the credibility of your neighbors by meeting and befriending them, but we at Villagers want to help grease the wheels a bit by establishing trust up-front, so you can meet your neighbors!