

AFG Project Proposal

Written by: Abi, Vishal, and Anika

Executive summary:

In today's consumer-driven world, clothing remains a symbol of self-expression and identity. However, the relentless pursuit of new garments often overlooks the environmental and economic consequences. Fashion production alone contributes to exacerbating environmental degradation. Rising inflation rates strain budgets, making traditional shopping unsustainable for many. Landfills grow with garments and textiles going to waste. Clothesmatch is our innovative application addressing these concerns by promoting sustainable practices, budget-friendly options, and extending clothing lifecycles. By merging thrifting with digital convenience, Clothesmatch offers a unique solution for conscious consumers seeking both style and sustainability. Clothesmatch offers three main features: profile creation for users to upload items for sale or trade, a browsing section where users swipe through items following a Tinder-style mechanism, swiping right on those they're interested in; and facilitated communication, allowing users to contact sellers for purchases or trades.

Introduction:

Problem:

In our ever-growing commercialized society, there's always a demand for clothing, a staple of individuality and self-expression. People want to get new clothes that will improve or refresh their look, but they don't always consider the environmental and economical impacts of excessive consumerism. According to an analysis by Business Insider, fashion production comprises 10% of total global carbon emissions, significantly contributing to our declining environmental welfare. Along with that, with inflation rates rising for goods just 3.2% in the last year alone, many find that their overall expenses budget needs to be modified and reduced. However, going to large chain department stores to get new clothes isn't always affordable to the typical budget anymore, as individual items can cost between \$30-\$50 or more. Even online stores that sell clothes at extremely affordable prices, like Shien, are also, on the downside, associated with environmental negligence and human labor exploitation.

Additionally, there is damage to our environment even after production as well, as the U.S Environmental Protection Agency reports that Americans generate 16 million tons of textile waste per year, of which 62.5% gets sent to landfills, increasing our global waste.

The conscious consumer is in this dilemma of trying to be both sustainable and not break the bank, but it seems like having both is near impossible. Meet Clothesmatch, an online shopping/bartering app that tackles these three issues. Through our app, we aim to reduce the impact and demand of fast fashion, help users economize while still providing great style, and increase the longevity of clothing so that less gets discarded in landfills. Taking the traditional thrifting experience and moving it onto an interactive and engaging digital platform, users will

enjoy a customized experience for finding a wardrobe staple or a unique piece unattainable anywhere else.

Audience:

This app is targeted towards a younger audience, teenagers and young adults in particular; however, this app is open to anyone above the age of 16 who is looking to exchange and acquire trendy clothing in a sustainable way. The tinder-inspired user interface is eye-catching for younger adults and offers an interactive and immersive way to look for clothes that are being put up to sell or trade.

Competition (+ 3 ways it will improve):

1. Depop is a social e-commerce company utilized by a lot of today's youth to find clothes sold by other users. Depop has a global presence in several countries, but is strongest in the United States. Depop is a strictly purchasing interaction, there is no option to trade like our app would provide. Because it's only purchasing, Depop takes a 10% commission fee from user sales, an aspect we would not include.
2. Facebook Marketplace is another online platform where users can list items and coordinate with potential buyers to sell their items. The transaction is not limited to just online payment; users have the freedom to communicate personally with the buyer to determine their preferred method of payment, which in some cases is cash or another third party app. We wish to include this feature in our app as we believe it would give users flexibility. However, Facebook Marketplace forces the interaction to take place over Facebook Messenger, an extension app not everyone has or would want to have. By

linking the listed item directly to the seller's inputted preferred methods of contact (ie. links to their email, Instagram, phone-number), the buyer-seller interaction has more autonomy as different people prefer different methods of communication.

3. Finally, one of the oldest online listing/shopping services that set a precedent for this specific type of business model has been Craigslist. Much like Facebook marketplace, people can list almost any item, along with gigs, services, jobs, etc. Thus, such a platform has a large volume of listings that needs to be presented in a visually organized way, however we don't believe this to currently be the case. Craigslist lacks visual appeal as its categories are formatted as identical-looking hyperlinks. The items are displayed in the traditional 3x3 format, which makes it easy for a user to look past when scrolling. Clothesmatch completely changes how a user interacts with the platform by incorporating a tinder-style swiping mechanism that is not only engaging, but also captures their individualized attention for each item.

Specifications:

Features

Clothesmatch has three major components. First, the user needs to be able to create a profile and upload items to sell or trade if they wish to do so. This would entail cloud storage to upload images and the ability to give items descriptions of size, weight, color, and any additional information. In the profile creation set-up, the user would also have the ability to link any socials, emails, or a phone-number so that an interested buyer knows how to contact them. Again, this would be contact information the user feels comfortable sharing, which is different

for everyone. Second is the home page, which is also where the clothes browsing section would belong. Much like a TikTok “For You” page, listed items from sellers would appear one at a time on cards holding an image with a title and brief description. The user could then swipe left to reject the item and continue browsing, or they could swipe right and “favorite” the item. That item would then appear on a separate page holding “matched” and “unmatched” columns. All favorite items would first appear in the “unmatched” column, meaning that you are simply interested in a garment someone else is offering. If the item then moves to “matched”, then it means that the same person with whom you were interested in acquiring from, is now interested in an item that you have to offer. Finally, the third component is facilitating the interaction. The user can click on an item from either the “matched” or “unmatched” column which would bring them to the seller’s profile featuring the favorited item and information about it. On that page would also be the seller’s contact information for the user to then get in contact with. If it is from a “matched” item, then both people can enter a trade for the garments, but that is for them to coordinate amongst themselves. “Unmatched” items can simply suffice as a purchase from the user, which is also coordinated between buyer and seller.

Feedback

The app will allow for user feedback through the platforms on which it is distributed. There will also be a section in the app that prompts users to contact the developers if desired. Mainly users can leave reviews or questions within the app stores it is being distributed on. This could be either the Google Play Store or the iOS App Store. Users can leave a detailed review of the app on these platforms and leave any potential feedback within these reviews. If the user would prefer to contact us directly rather than leave a review on the respective app store, there

will be an option within the settings menu of the app to contact the developers which will link to an appropriate email allowing us to see and respond to any feedback. Upon receiving any feedback we will respond directly via the messaging platform the user contacted us with. If it were a review on an app store we would directly respond to the review explaining our current situation and a potential estimate for when the issue could be addressed. Likewise, we would do the same with any email inquiries or feedback.

Potential future additions (3)

There are a variety of next-step features that would allow the app to be more personalized and convenient for our users.

The most important of them would be a centralized platform to facilitate communication between users intending to trade clothes. The app currently broadcasts the contact information of sellers, allowing for users to gain access to that information and choose a platform of their preference to reach out. To build off this, the app can initiate an open chat feature, directly through the app. This will not only make it simpler for users to go straight from shopping for the product to reaching out to the seller, but also save buyers and sellers time adding and accessing contact information of various platforms.

Another beneficial feature would be user-tailored content. As of right now, the app doesn't involve any features that make the posts a user sees personalized to what they are looking for. To combat this issue, a future work could be making homepage feeds more customized towards what a user is interested in. This can be done through post-specific tags that can help narrow down the search. An enhanced version of this would be implementing an

adaptive algorithm for the home page to ensure the content a user sees as they are swiping through posts is aligned to what kinds of clothes they are looking for.

Finally, a third future work to aid in the convenience of this app would be building in an in-app payment system that would allow users to buy clothes directly through the app. This would be a strong option for those who are only looking to buy clothes, not trade, as they will be able to select the clothing they like and pay straight through the app, without any external applications needed. All three of these future works tie in key additional elements that can enhance the app's pre-existing features, all while making the application more personalized and easy to use.

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