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Project Proposal
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StorySeller:

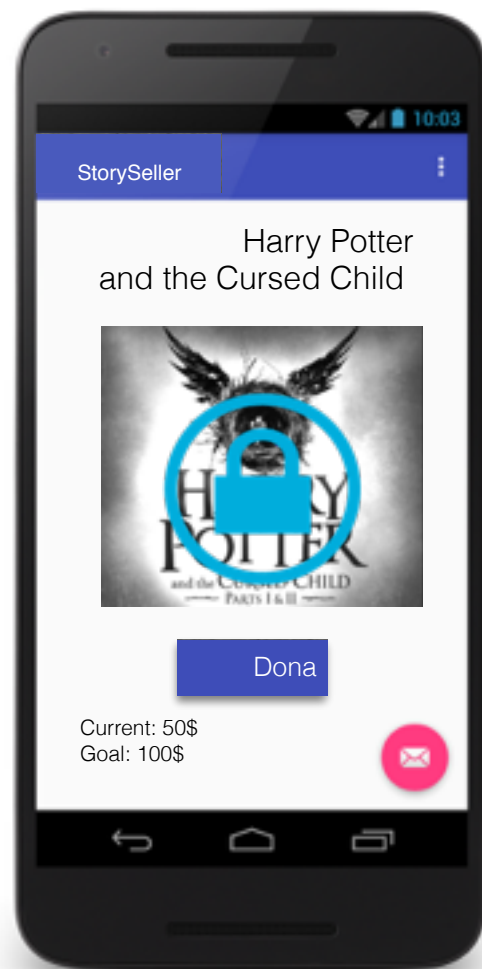
Sell a story, not a book

Vision

In current age, everyone has a story to tell, but often their stories fall on deaf ears because publishers wouldn't take their stories. Take Fifty Shades of Gray for example, it was created originally as a FanFiction of Twilight, and shows the creativity of fans can exceed that of the original authors. The creativity of fans are not always appreciated and gratified with money. We believe amateurs should have a place to share their works and be fairly compensated for their time and effort. Recently things like Kickstarter is helping with this by crowdfunding many interesting projects not picked up by powerful companies. We think this can be used to help amateur authors.

In our vision, amateur authors can publish their works online and receive payment from the whole crowd instead of single users. Authors could post only parts of their stories first and ask for a certain amount of fund, while readers donate money to stories they want to continue reading. Once a story has received enough fund as specified by its author, the complete version of the story will be released on the website. In this case, the curiosity of the public would grant the authors their desired amount of reward.

We chose stories instead of other media because editing text is more flexible. Authors could decide whether to put partial paragraphs of their stories (like movie trailers) or put half of the story (so that readers are really eager to know what happened next in the stories). Also text files require smaller spaces and are easier to display in the app.



Software Architecture:

We want to make this an Android app so we will use Android Studio. It will take advantage of Amazon Cloud Services to hold the stories. PayPal API would be needed to handle money transfers.

Challenges:

In many ways this idea's success and failure live and die with creating the community for it. Marketing traction will be difficult, because in practice the crowd funding doesn't happen without a crowd. Related to this is understanding the needs of users. Neither of us have written a story and know what would be preferred to pitching the stories. On the consumer side of things, I can see the difficulty in wanting to put money into a story before having any reviews on it. This might require editors or other professions that we do not know about for the field of publishing. A lot of this App would require real life data to tweak aspects of it. For example, we want the price to decay if an author is asking for too much. Adjusting the rate of decay will require reviews from both our amateur authors and story buyers.

On the technical side of things. This project works directly with money transfer as a feature. This means any mistakes on user profile security would be drastic than in other projects. We will also have to adapt our ideas to match the tools available to us. Amazon Cloud Service and PayPal already have set APIs with set available features that we will have to morph our project to fully utilize. Integrating different tools together is challenging since many of us need to pick up new tool kits and new platform.