## Discrete Sexual Education

## **Design Problem**

Hearing the word "sex" tends to make quite a few people blush. You might've just felt a pang of embarrassment just reading the word in my proposal, but, if you did, you aren't alone. In fact, in a study published in BMJ Open, one of students' top complaints about their sex education classes is that the teacher seemed uncomfortable



Fig. 1 [2]

teaching the class; however, topics concerning sex and related topics such as sexuality and puberty are very important subjects, especially for teenagers [1]. We aren't doing enough to teach teenagers about sexual topics. Currently, only 24 states and the District of Columbia mandate sex-ed classes and only 13 states require sex education to be medically accurate, but even these states vary widely in what content they teach [2,3]. For example, only the 8 states highlighted in Fig. 1 require sex-ed classes to mention consent [2]. So, if students aren't being taught this important information in schools, where do

they learn it and how do they track if they've learned what they need to? Many students turn to parents, peers, and pop culture to answer their questions [3]. This can lead to inaccurate, biased, and harmful thoughts about how human sexuality and their bodies work.

## **Analysis**

Many apps and software have set out to fix some of these problems with access to accurate information about sexual health and education; however, none have set out to fix more than one issue at a time. "My Sex Doctor" (seen in Fig. 2) is an app that lets the user browse articles about sexual education, but, per it's name, it's not very discreet [4]. Many menstruation tracking apps like "Clue" and "Eve" don't necessarily sound like menstruation apps to allow the app to exist discreetly on a user's phone, but when it comes to privacy in the sexual health and education market, there is only one notable option: "Real Talk". This app suffers from juvenile design as it shows all content on the app as a messaging-type service meant to relate to teens, complete with off-brand emojis [5]. This pushes both teens and adults alike away



from using the product. Surprisingly, no apps on the market have attempted to allow privacy by allowing users to disable internet services for the app. Many of these applications need the internet to load articles, thus leaving an internet history trail, which is an issue for many teens hoping to discretely access information. These apps also do not employ self-tracking features, allowing users to easily see which articles they have read and what they have yet to read. This would be especially helpful if used as a reading tool in association with a sexual education class.

## References

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