Presenting...

BackScratch

"You scratch my back, I'll scratch your's!"
What is BackScratch?
(BluePrint)

BackScratch is a mobile phone app aimed at facilitating the exchange of simple favors between human beings. Need help moving a couch? Or even just need a hug? Call in a BackScratch, and you may well have an extra hand (or hug) within minutes!
How does it work?

(Manual/Manifesto)

There are two ways to interact with this app: as a Requester or BackScratcher. Things kick off when a requester posts a BackScratch. To post a request, just type in a description of the requested favor, and set a countdown time (anywhere from 1 minute to 1 month) to let the BackScratcher know when they should drop by to help.

Help bring in groceries!

5 min

Accepted!
How does it work?

(Manual/Manifesto)

Other BackScratch users in the area would be notified (to the degree that they allow BackScratch notifications on their phone), and would be able to accept and then fulfill the request if they so choose. The ability for users to regulate BackScratch notifications is a key part of including humans "in the loop" of this technology. Irony is having a virtual BackScratch notification interrupt you when you are trying to help someone in the real world!

Help bring in groceries!

5 min

Accepted!
How does it work?

Requesters and BackScratchers are not separate individuals! In order to be able to request a BackScratch one must first fulfill a BackScratch request. Generosity and reciprocity are the names of the game!
App Features:
(Manual/Manifesto)
Aesthetic: The layout of the app will be as minimalistic and gimmick-free as possible. The purpose of this minimalist design aesthetic is to reduce any attention that could be drawn away from the real-life social interaction that the app aims to optimize.
App Features:

(Manual/Manifesto)

BackScratch Community: There are many valid concerns when it comes to interacting with people through BackScratch, just like any interaction with a stranger. These concerns can be easily addressed with the Community feature! Add members of your neighborhood, school, family, etc. and create a Community. When you go into the app you can post or fulfill BackScratch for any selected Community, which would only include users included in that designated group. BackScratch includes humans in the loop by letting users control and input who gets to see their requests.
Point system: For every BackScratch someone fulfills, they earn one BackScratch point, and for every BackScratch requested (and eventually fulfilled), the user spends one BackScratch point. The simplistic and reciprocal nature of the point system saves the user from wasting brainpower on a convoluted point system rather than real world interaction and also encourages users to go out and pitch into the app’s ethos of human flourishing and generosity.
App Features:

(Manual/Manifesto)

Rules: At any time, the BackScratcher can cancel the interaction, and no BackScratch point would be rewarded or spent by either party. This simple cancel feature is a crucial part of the app, as it represents the principle that the person requesting the favor is not entitled to their favor. This biases the app towards smaller, simpler acts of kindness that keep interactions lighter and less demanding/weighty.
Who does it affect and how?

(Blueprint)

BackScratch affects a wide variety of folk, from a bored teenager in the city looking to fill his time by helping someone out to a whole neighborhood street who can all use the app to help an elderly lady take out the trash. The possibilities are endless for the types of people, and communities that can be connected and nurtured through real life social interaction.
Of course, negative social interactions are within the realm of possibility when using BackScratch. Cordial conversations can be very fulfilling, but negative exchanges are simply a reality of human interaction. There is a silver lining to these types of interactions, however, as they can provide users with a more holistic and honest understanding of humanity, which can catalyze learning and even a sense of eudaemonia. Our app is founded on the belief that human interaction will eventually lead to flourishing and sometimes even the sublime.
Who does it affect and how?

(Blueprint)
The goal of BackScratch is to use mobile technology, which often socially isolates users in public, to connect communities and create fulfilling social interactions. In doing so, we ultimately hope to produce human flourishing and eudaemonic fulfillment from nothing but a few lines of code and the generosity that already exists in the world.