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SAMARITANS' TEEN LINE  
An Interactive Qualifying Project Report  
submitted to the Faculty of  
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
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Degree of Bachelor of Science  
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**Abstract:**

The Samaritans of Boston approached WPI with a problem with their current communication system in reaching out to teenagers in need. Based on the researches that were done and guidelines put forth by the Samaritans, text messaging and instant messaging were found to be the most utilized forms of communication among teenagers. And a business model for each system was put into place with standards and price approximations for each system proposed.

| <b>Table of Content</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>I. Introduction</b>  | 4           |
| o Problem statement.  |             |
| o Goals of the study  |             |
| <b>II. Background</b>   | 5           |
| o About the Samaritans of Boston/Framingham.  |             |
| o The “history” of the project. Opportunity to apply technology to reach teens who were not currently able or willing to connect with them. |             |
| o People and organization.  |             |
| <b>III. Findings</b>  | 8           |
| a) Research   |             |
| b) Existing systems, particularly U.K.  |             |
| c) QFD  |             |
| <b>IV. Recommendations</b>  | 15          |
| · System spec   |             |
| · Software  |             |
| 1 Hardware  |             |
| · Costs   |             |
| 1 Training  |             |
| 2 Alternatives  |             |
| <b>V. Conclusion and future work</b>  | 22          |
| <b>VI. Teen Suicide Statistics</b>  | 24          |
| <b>VII. Reference</b>   | 25          |

## **I. Introductions:**

The IQP project we have undertaken is a look at the effectiveness of teen suicide prevention and awareness by the Samaritans Organization of Boston and Framingham. The result of our research into teen suicide is a business model to be used in the future by the Samaritans so that they may be better equipped technologically to stay in contact with the teens of today who are thinking about taking their own lives.

The project was run over two terms in collaboration with the Samaritans of Boston, headed by Roberta Hurtig. The advisor of the project was Computer Science Professor Gary Pollice. The problem that was presented to us by the Samaritans in our meeting was that the world concerning teenagers was changing as far as technology in communication and in the way teens receive information in their daily lives. The Samaritans as of right now are only equipped to handle phone calls to their phone lines that they have. This might be fine to a person thinking about committing suicide who knows about the Samaritans and has access to the number, but the Samaritans is not a very well known organization to the typical teenager. Due to this lack of knowledge, teens may carry out suicidal thoughts all because they either did not know of the Samaritans because of lack of communication, or knew of them, but did not decide to make the call because perhaps they were uncomfortable talking over the phone about a subject this personal.

Our first task was to search for all the information we could relating to the facts and statistics about suicide as it relates to teenagers. Finding out this information was to

give us a start as to how we could formulate ideas for solutions to the problem at hand. After finding all the information we could on teen suicide, we then decided to reach out to the Samaritans themselves and gather information through talking to them and visiting their base of operations. Our last bit of information gathering came in the form of contacts overseas which were given to us by Peter Robinson, another volunteer for the Samaritans. These contacts gave us insight into the technology and effectiveness of the Samaritans and suicide prevention organizations that are established in Europe.

## **II. Background**

After we had gathered all our information, it was time to take a look at the current technology that was used by the Samaritans of Boston and how we could better it immediately by using ideas that are already readily available to them in today's world. These technologies included e-mail, text messaging and instant messaging online. And we were reaffirmed in our belief that this technology could immediately help the Samaritans due to the fact that all these technologies had already been implemented in the UK with success. The only trouble that you have with these technologies as it relates to the Samaritans is the factor of anonymity, which is the basis of the Samaritan's beliefs because the last thing the organization wants to do is violate a person's trust, in which case the people using the system would then lose all faith in the Samaritans and choose to go elsewhere for help or try to deal with it themselves. With these technologies it would be tough to keep anonymity as far as email addresses and text messaging.

The Samaritans UK utilizes two major methods that the Samaritans in Massachusetts do not. The first of which is an email network so that anyone can send an email to the Samaritans and expect a response within 24 hours. Each email is sent to a

gender ambiguous name ([jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)) where it is then processed through their server and sent to a befriender. If the befriender is busy, the email is stored to be replied to later. If the email is being replied to immediately the befriender will reply and then before sending it back out, will have it looked over and checked for anything inappropriate or unnecessary to ensure quality assurance. The email system, like anything else the Samaritans use, is completely confidential. When the email is processed through the server all details of the sender's information are removed, such as their email address. Emails are then kept for 30 days so if a person was to email the Samaritans again, the befriender would be able to look up a history of their earlier conversation from an ID tag given to the email (since all personal information is removed from the email) and continue from there. After the 30 day period the email is deleted permanently.

The second method that is implemented in the UK is a text messaging network that can be accessed at any time through text messages on a cell phone. The Samaritans have been running this pilot program since 2006 with amazing success. The methods that are used to carry out the text messaging network are very similar to those methods used in the email network. The text message will be sent to the Samaritans and processed through a server where all of the personal information will be removed. The text will then be given an ID tag by a software program and will be sent to a befriender on a computer. The befriender will then type up the response on the computer to send back to the person's cell phone. The text is reviewed and then sent out back to the person in need. These conversations usually happen quickly and will have several exchanges between the befriender and the caller but the turnaround time is very small for response.

The Samaritans UK does a very effective job of managing not only the phone lines, but also the email and text messaging network. The numbers of people who utilize the Samaritans for all their services are very large, so they must be doing something right in the implementation of their methods. In 2006 alone, the Samaritans pilot year for text messaging, they received over 250,000 text messages to their network across the UK and Ireland. And the email service has been up and running for over 10 years now and receives on average about 400 emails daily. It is also well noted that one of the major ways that they can support all this activity is because they have the man-power to support it. Overall their methods are simple but effective in handling the needs of people who are either depressed or thinking about suicide. And with the implementation of the email and text messaging network, they have given people who may be apprehensive about calling the hotline a way to communicate their feelings in a safe and non-verbal way.

The problem of letting teens know that the Samaritans exist is directly related to money. The Samaritans is a non-profit organization which receives almost all of its money through donations. This means that they need every cent they can get and it also means that there is no money for advertising or even perhaps sponsoring a link on the world's most popular search engine, Google, so that when teens type in certain keywords relating to suicide or depression, the Samaritan's website would pop up first providing them with immediate help. Instead the search engines are riddled with useless pharmaceutical company websites and self-help sites that also provide no help to a teen who is in desperate need for information and/or a helping hand to pull themselves out of the situation they are in or the way they are feeling.

### **III. Findings**

The outcome of the project was found by putting all these factors together and coming up with a solution to fit the Samaritan's problem that went beyond current technology and took monetary restraints into account to come up with an idea that would be truly beneficial to not only the Samaritans, but every other teen out there who is depressed or considering to take their own life. Using the business plan that we provide to the Samaritans, they will be able to take it to any company or group that can appropriately build the technology and have them implement it. Our business model, which follows this project overview, will hopefully lay the groundwork for a better future for the Samaritans so that they can better reach out to teens in the Boston/Framingham area today to more suitably address and guide teens through the problems that they are presented with.

The problem presented to our IQP group is to research methods for the Samaritans of Boston and Framingham to assist teens seeking help. The problem with the Samaritans now is that their current system for dealing with teens in need is inadequate. This is reflected in the small number of teenage callers and the rising number of teenage suicides. The Samaritans are considered lacking in the means of reaching out to people when compared with the U.K. and other parts of the world.

The goal of all our research is to determine a new system of communication such that it can effectively handle current teenage needs but is also anonymous. The ideas outlined in the report adhere to the specific needs of the Samaritans of Boston and Framingham. The needs of the teenagers include a way to communicate their problems to

a befriender in a comfortable situation. This means a movement away from voice communication by phone because teens are using the phone to talk less and less these days. The technology that the Samaritans need to move towards is a more modern implementation of communication including text messaging and instant messaging via the Samaritans website. Along with descriptions of the new technology needed to move forward, the cost analysis is also determined for all the assets needed. The report summarizes a list of requirements needed by the software such as automated messaging for off-hours or when a befriender has stepped away from the keyboard.

The report will show that through our research it is evident that an increasing amount of teenagers are using text messaging and that number shows no signs of abating. Outlined in the report will also be situations and startup methods for how to roll out the text messaging and instant messaging systems to the public or controlled environment. The roll out of the programs will include ideas on how to train the befrienders through text and instant messaging. These ideas in training will include how the befrienders should handle a conversation differently online or via text message. This comprises of shorter responses by befrienders for text messages, utilizing lingo familiar to teens in text and instant messaging, and the fact that when conversing online or by text message, the turnaround time on the messages will not be immediate. The lingo for online messaging and text messaging will be provided in an easily accessible online dictionary.

The Samaritans of Boston was established in 1974 and was merged with the Framingham branch in 2005 to become Samaritans. The focus of this organization has always been to help anyone in need of emotional despair or feeling that could eventually lead to suicide. Anyone can call the Samaritans and get help regardless of age, ethnicity,

gender, race, disabilities or religion. When a person calls the Samaritans, they can be assured that the conversation will remain anonymous and confidential. No emergency services will be contacted unless the befriender asks and is instructed to do so. It is this trust that is the basis for what the Samaritans believe in and strive for. There has been an overwhelming amount of contribution from the Samaritans organization at both the Boston and Framingham branches. Roberta Hurtig, Executive Director of Samaritans, Eileen Davis, Director of the Framingham Site, Peter Robinson on the Samaritan's Board of Directors and Ron White, Director of Program Services in the Boston branch have all provided this project with unlimited support and information that helped bring this project to what it has become. Along with the staff of the Samaritans, all of the teen bfrienders that have offered their help to the project have been invaluable to the research and gathering of information. The teens have given excellent feedback on how they as teens see a text messaging and instant messaging service working for the Samaritans.

The need for the project arose out of a common trend in Boston and the surrounding areas. The teen line that has been set up for the Samaritans has been severely underutilized and improperly abused on a consistent basis. This includes adults calling the teen line, inappropriate or prank calls to the teen line, and just that teens aren't picking up the phone and calling the line. The one reason that stood out for the lack of contact by teens was that today's typical teenager does not like talking on the phone. There is something about the one-on-one voice interaction between them that makes them timid to call and use the service.

To get teens to contact the Samaritans once again, there is a need to set up other forms of communication that teenagers would feel more comfortable using and thus,

contact the Samaritans more often when they are in need of someone to talk to. The forms of communication that are most widely used by teens today are text messaging via cell phone and instant messaging via the internet. Both the text messaging and instant messaging services will be for teens only and will adhere to all the standards that the phone lines have stuck to all these years. Both will be anonymous and the befrienders using the system will have to be trained on both systems in order to use them. By having the befrienders trained in the lingo and dialect of text and instant messaging, they will have a much better chance of listening and being able to really help people in need. Through advertising in local schools and the already utilized Google advertising, the text messaging and instant messaging services will provide the Samaritans with better opportunity to support the teens of the Boston/Framingham area.

It is uncertain when and where text messaging was first used. Many companies claimed that the first SMS messaging was sent by their company, but most have come to accept that Neil Papworth was the first to utilize text messaging approximately sixteen years ago (Bryant, 2006). Since the mobile phone doesn't have the capability of forming words, Neil sent the messages from a computer keyboard. Text messaging or "texting" generally refers sending short messages via the mobile phone by a program called Short Messaging Service (SMS) (Bryant, 2006). Text messaging allows you to send short (no longer than 160 characters) and quick messages without even interrupting other people [1]. For the past decade, text messaging was more popular in other part of the world than in the United States (Ahonen, 2007). With the limitation of texting and higher cost per text, the United States has just begun to catch up within the past few years. SMS was

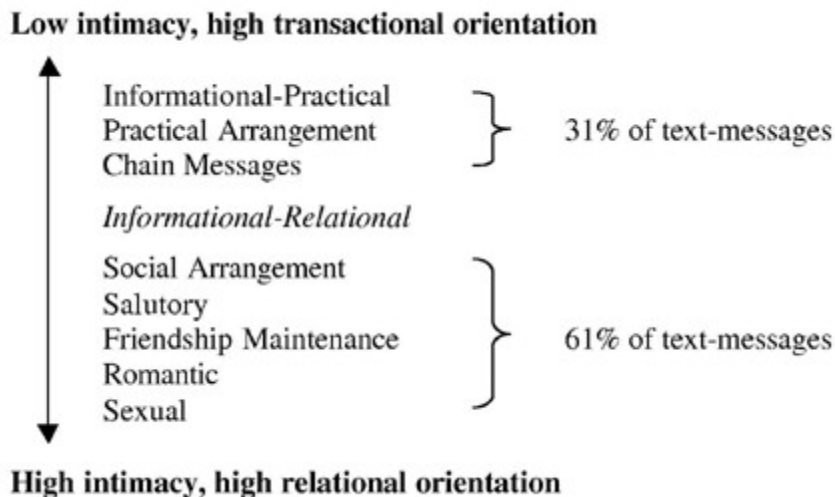
originally developed for GSM, which is not used in the United States (Ahonen, 2007). America was addicted on voice as a method for communication because it is cheap and convenient (Charny, 2001). There was also the problem of different companies. Before 2001, texting a person with a different plan was not possible (Charny, 2001). Since the groundbreaking launch of AT&T Wireless' inter-carrier text messaging program in November 2001, followed by a CTIA-led interoperability consortium including national carriers and others early in 2002, the number of text messages in the United States has grown astronomically to over seven billion messages sent every month (Charny, 2001).

For a flat monthly fee, a subscriber can now sign up for a messaging bundle and send any combination of text, instant, pictures and video messages. T-Mobile USA, for example, is currently offering 'messaging value bundles', which allow customers to send and receive 400, 1000 or unlimited messages per month for \$4.99, \$9.99 and \$14.99, respectively," (Ahonen, 2007), text messaging, like IM, has become the new, electronic written culture that is shortening all of that. A text message sent via mobile phone is usually confined to 160 characters or less and takes several seconds to send (Charny, 2001). According to Pew Internet and American Life Project, a third of the cell phone owner already uses texting messaging as a form of communication. It is estimated by Garner Institute that there were 189 billion mobile messages sent in 2007 in North America, and this is predicted to grow to the 300 billion in 2008. "The market is being driven by increased penetration of users, more frequent usage of peer-to-peer messaging, and unlimited and bucketed messaging plans," said Tole Hart, research director at Gartner. "There has also been some uptake of mobile e-mail via POP3 mailboxes and mobile IM service, but it's very small compared with the uptake of SMS. These services

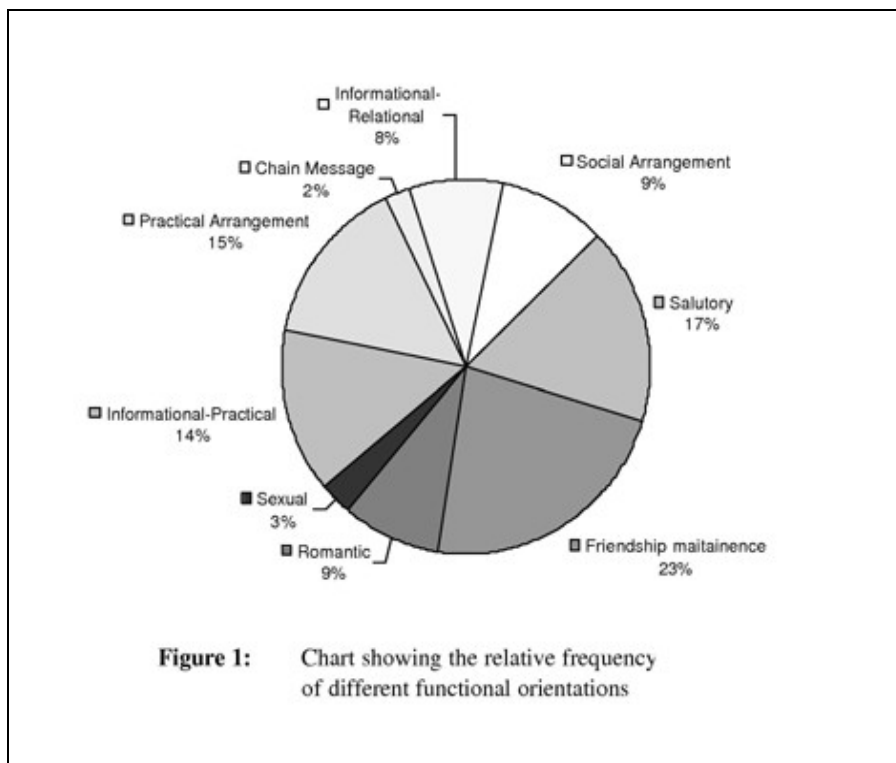
are used primarily as an extension to a PC. However, the market is seeing a number of consumers using BlackBerry and Palm Treo devices to access address books, phone numbers and e-mail.” (Ahonen, 2007)

Because growing up in an era where new technologies are blooming, teenagers have a tendency to acknowledge the new technology system at a faster rate than adults. In the spring of 1998, six years after its introduction to the adult population, European teens discovered SMS (Charny, 2001). While adults barely noticed this novel mobile capability, teenagers embraced it as their own; within four years it was well imbedded within the teen social culture (Noguchi, 2005). While in the United States, text messaging has recently exploded in North America, it was looked upon as one of the current teenager generation unexplainable behavior (Noguchi, 2005). According to CTIA, about 7.3 billion SMS messages are sent every month in the United States.

As a senior researcher, Amanda Lenhart, of Pew Internet & American Life Project states "There is something different about communications that are mediated by a piece of technology; it is easier to talk about difficult subjects, and that is both good and bad," Lenhart has interviewed many teenagers about how they use technology. "You don't see the person's upper lip tremble. You don't hear their voice quiver. You don't get those external, non-textual cues," so delicate subjects might be easier to broach, and also sometimes easier to misunderstand, she said (Lenhart, 2007).



(Pressler, 2006)



(Pressler,

2006)

Market researchers point out that the group that is most likely to send out and receive text messages are from the ages of 13-24. Text messaging has become so popular among teenagers that the parents, instead of worrying about budgeting for talking

minutes, they now have to worry about the amount of text messages that are available for their teenager to play with. As in one of the Washington Post article “For Texting Teen, OMG Moment When the Phone Bill Arrive”, it was said that teenagers can text so much that they have the potential to exceed \$1000 on any given bill (Olsen, 2007). This was the case for Sofia Rubenstein, her text messaging racks up a huge phone bill for the family’s wireless bill each month (Olsen, 2007). Sofia’s situation is a little too drastic to describe the average American teenagers but it’s just to show how much teenagers can put this gadget to use.

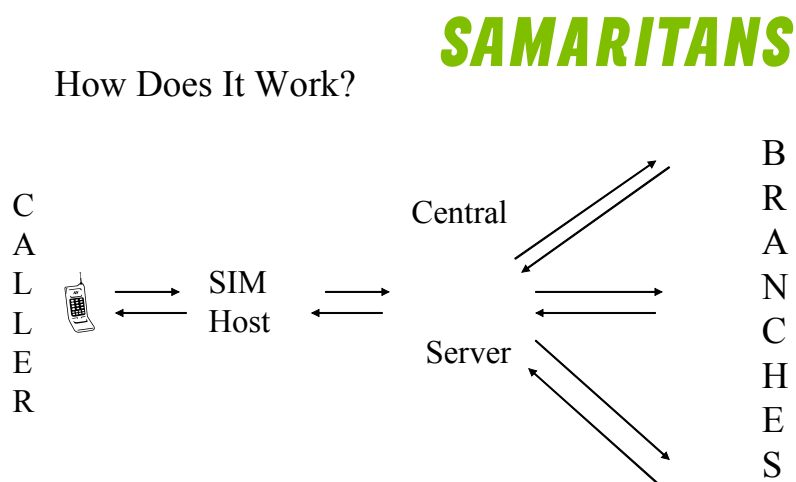
Now, there are approximately two trillion messages sent worldwide each year (Ahonen, 2007). This communication device is growing and will continue to grow, evident is in the fact the many countries around the world have used this system long before it became popular in the US and there’s no sign of it crumbling anytime in the near future.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

Our recommended solution for how the Samaritans can move forward in dealing with their problems is two-fold. First, the Samaritans will need to develop or acquire the programs and technology necessary to develop a text messaging service to coincide with their telephone service. The same will have to be done to implement the instant messaging service as a feature on their website. Secondly, the organization will have to come up with a set of standards for using the programs. This will adhere to how the befrienders use the programs to help people. There will need to be certain regulations in place to maximize the efficiency of the services and also proper training so that the befriender will know what to do if a certain situation arose. There will also need to be

fail-safes in place to keep the trust of the teens attempting to contact the Samaritans such as automated responses and levels of security in place to protect the integrity of the system and the identities of the people in need.

Through research of the current technology and communication with Alan Hymnes, a member of the Samaritans U.K. who is already using this technology, we came up with a plan and price range for each facet of the technology. Shown below is a drawing Alan sent to me to describe the way the network works.



In creating a text messaging network there are several things needed in order to get started. The first is the server that will have the capability of processing in and out text messages. This means that the server will have to be equipped with a SIM card so that it can send/receive messages from mobile networks. And since Samaritans is looking to operate between the two branches only one server is needed. HP is a large provider of servers with SIM capabilities. The minimum requirements for the server will depend on the software that is running it. A company called Avanquest solutions works with

Business SMS software and they give a list of minimum requirements for a server running their Text Message Server software.

## **Text Message Server Business SMS**

### **Technical Specs**

#### **Processor**

600 MHz Pentium III compatible or faster processor, 1 GHz or faster processor recommended.

#### **Framework**

TMS requires the .NET Framework version 2.0 to be installed prior to installation of the TMS Software.

#### **Operating System**

Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or later

Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional with SP4

Microsoft Windows 2000 Server with SP4 or later

Windows Server 2003 Standard, Enterprise or Datacentre editions with SP1 or later

Windows Server 2003 Web Edition SP1

Windows Small Business Server 2003 with Service Pack 1 or later

#### **Memory**

192 megabytes (MB) of RAM or more; 512 megabytes (MB) or more recommended

#### **Hard Disk**

Approximately 5 gig of available hard-disk space for the recommended installation

An example server that has SIM capabilities that would be adequate for the text messaging network is the HP ProLiant DL320 G5 Rack Server. This retails on most websites for approximately \$930.00. And to be able to run the server between both the Framingham and Boston branches a server operating system will be needed. As you can see the choice for operating systems is based upon how large the network is going to be.

Since there will only be a small amount of computers networked by the server, an operating system such as Windows Server 2003 Standard would be a little extravagant for system. The prices of all the operating systems run from \$150.00 to \$1000.00 respectively. Along with the servers there will also be a need for computer workstations equipped to handle the software that will be running on it. The workstations will also need to have internet capabilities because of the text messaging and instant messaging networks.

The next part of the network that is needed is by far the most important. The gateway provider is the main restriction on the network as it is the gateway provider that will be responsible for delivering the text messages to and from befrienders and callers. Verizon Wireless is a popular gateway provider in our area and has plans available to businesses and organizations for the services needed by the text messaging network.

The last thing that is needed is the software to be able to view the conversations incoming from teens. The software will need to have several capabilities to ensure quality assurance with the Samaritans. The most important qualification the software must have is the assurance of anonymity. This means that when a number sends a text message to the Samaritans number, the caller's number must be removed and given an ID tag. This means that when a befriender is having a conversation with someone they will not see their number but rather the unique ID tag assigned to it. The phone number however will not be completely erased but rather stored somewhere in memory along with the ID tag. So if the teen contacts the Samaritans again, the number will be hidden again and the same ID tag used last time to identify the caller will be used again.

Since the befrienders will be typing on a computer they will not always remember to keep their responses to the confines of a single text message. For this reason there should be a safeguard in place to not allow the befrienders to create a response longer than the capacity of a single text message on a cell phone. The conversations should appear in a window to the befriender similar to that of a text message. The messages should contain a timestamp and also be color coded between teen and befriender so that no confusion can be caused by having all messages be the same color. The software also needs to have some type of message alarm to alert the befriender that a new message has been received. This can be done by having the window flash a certain color on the screen, cause a noise to be made when a new message is received, or both. The software also needs to have a unique login name for each befriender to accommodate the preferences of the befriender. The preferences could include color coding preferences or the maximum amount of conversations that can be held at one time. The unique login would also be used as a security tool so that the befrienders would only be allowed access to certain things on the network while administrators on the workstations will be able to configure certain aspects of the system unable to be touched by befriender accounts. Other network safeguards to prevent hacking such as anti-virus software and anti-spyware software should also be installed on the workstations

The software must also have in place a list of automated messages to be sent out to teens trying to contact the system in different situations. These situations could include a befriender away from keyboard for whatever reason, no befrienders in the branches to take calls, if the number of conversations has reached the maximum for a single befriender or something as simple as a disclaimer automatically sent out to a teen

before the befriender has responded for the first time. In the case that all the befrienders are too busy to take any more messages, a message might automatically go out telling the teen of the other services that Samaritans has such as the phone lines. Each situation would have a unique automated response to adequately handle it and they would be sent out appropriately by the program. The problem of hardware restraints can also play into the system if a befriender goes away for too long the monitor may shut off to save energy, or the computer might hibernate or go into sleep mode in which the programs running would be suspended. This is easily remedied by changing the hardware settings on all workstations used by befrienders.

The last function of the program is the ability to create a log for the call and synopsis of the call similar to what is done now with the phone lines. This feature should automatically pop up when a befriender ends a conversation by either exiting the window or hitting a button on the window to end the conversation. This will be helpful in dealing with quality assurance and if the person messages the Samaritans again, the befriender dealing with the person can now see the nature of the previous conversation(s) on the screen and what was talked about. If a teen is consistent in inappropriately using the service the software should have the ability to block that person's phone number from contacting the service again.

Since befrienders using both the text messaging and instant messaging software will be talking in lingo associated with texting and IM'ing, there is a need for an online dictionary to be used as a reference during exchanges between teens and befrienders. Samaritans can either use preexisting dictionaries such as [lingo2word.com](http://lingo2word.com) and [netlingo.com](http://netlingo.com) or make their own which will be linked on their website. The advantage to

using a preexisting dictionary is that all the work is already done for you, but may not exactly suit Samaritans' needs. The advantage of creating your own would be that it is editable and exactly suits your needs as an organization, however, you will have to create the dictionary from the ground up most likely using a free tool such as GoogleDocs to create an html file of your dictionary to be linked to the website as a webpage.

This entire list of requirements and recommendations for the software is not only applicable to the text messaging software but also the instant messaging software. It will utilize almost the same user interface and follow the same rules as the text messaging software. The instant messaging software will also be able to run on the same hardware that the text messaging software will run on so there will be no need to acquire additional hardware. The major discrepancy between the two is that the instant messaging service should be accessed by teens through the website as a messaging program built-into the website. This means that there will be no program needed to mask a phone number; instead the masking of the person's IP address may be necessary to preserve anonymity. The constraint on the size of the messages sent out and received will also be eliminated as most messaging programs provide more than adequate space to formulate a message. The advantage of using a built in messaging system is that there is no trail left on the computer that parents may be able to find. There is no buddy list that the person has to add to in order to talk to Samaritans and when they are finished conversing, since the conversation took place in a webpage, the web page may simply be closed leaving only the URL of the Samaritan's website in the person's history.

The training for both text messaging and instant messaging will be unique but also similar in certain ways. Before training on either system the befriender must have

proper experience on the phone lines (unless they are able to do so) as that will help them prepare for the two new systems. For each system the befrienders will need to be familiar with the lingo of text messaging and instant messaging. They will also need to be able to carry on multiple conversations at once in case there are multiple people contacting the service. As specified before, each user may have the opportunity to set the maximum number of conversations per befriender. The befrienders will also need proficient computer skills to operate each system and must be familiar with all the aspects of each of the programs.

## **V. Conclusion and Future Work**

The descriptions of both the text messaging and instant messaging software can be used to create each of the systems by a software company or a series of MQP's that can be completed at WPI. Preexisting text messaging (SMS) software is very rare and is only available in a few places to be purchased or licensed. Although there are a few systems out there, the only one that would be able to fit the needs of the Samaritans is the program offered by the Samaritans U.K. Every other software system we found was inadequate to the Samaritans' needs and would be unable to be adapted. There are also no open-source (free) software programs available to fit the Samaritans' needs. As for the instant messaging system there exists no open source software that could be found to integrate into the Samaritans' website. Most of the findings were stand alone systems that were unable to be integrated into a website and left a substantial trail back to Samaritans. One communication tool that can be purchased seems to fit most of the needs outlined above and can be used to rollout the program to a small group of subjects for test purposes only. A company called Xigla offers a product called Absolute Live

Support XE which is available for download for \$149.00. The system resembles a live chat support line similar to something you would access on a website such as Dell.com when you require assistance or technical support.

The text messaging system and the instant messaging system should first be rolled out into a controlled environment after proper training of befrienders. This will allow Samaritans to see what works and what does not so they can make appropriate changes before rolling the systems out into the public.

Our hope for this project upon completion is to provide teenagers with a safe, confidential way to access support when they are in need. And in the fast paced world that teens live in today, accommodations must be made by the Samaritans to fit their lifestyles. This major change from the phones to text and instant messaging is a major step in the right direction towards helping teens who may be depressed or suicidal in today's society. We hope that the Samaritans will take our business model and use it to the fullest potential to create a foundation for the future of the organization in their relationship with teenagers.

The following information are some background information regarding teenagers suicide rates. This information allows us to

### Teen Suicide Statistics

Teen suicide was the 3rd leading cause of death among young adults and adolescents 15 to 24 years of age, following unintentional injuries and homicide. The rate was 9.9/100,000 or .01%.

The teen suicide rate among youth aged 15-19 was 7.9/100,000 or 1,611 deaths among 20,271,312 teenagers in this age group. The gender ratio for teenage group was 5:1 (males: females).

**Attempted Teenage Suicides** No annual national data on all attempted teenage suicides are available. Other research indicates that there are an estimated 8-25 attempted suicides for each teen suicide death; the ratio is higher in women and youth and lower in men and the elderly. More women than men report a history of attempted suicide, with a gender ratio of 3:1. Four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warnings.

More men than women die by suicide.

73% of all suicide deaths are white males.

80% of all firearm suicide deaths are white males.

If you have a gun in your home, you are FIVE times more likely to have a suicide in your house than homes without a gun.

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Teen suicide was the 3rd leading cause of death among young adults and adolescents 15 to 24 years of age, following unintentional injuries and homicide. The rate was 9.9/100,000 or .01%.

The teen suicide rate among youth aged 15-19 was 7.9/100,000 or 1,611 deaths among 20,271,312 teenagers in this age group.

Alaska has the highest rate of suicide in the nation at 23.6%.

It is estimated that depression increases the risk of a first suicide attempt by at least 14-fold.

Over half of all kids who suffer from depression will eventually attempt suicide at least once, and more than seven percent will die as a result.

Firearms are used in a little more than half of all youth suicides.

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