

2020

AwARe: Eliminating Implicit Bias using AR

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Recommended Citation

Bose, Shagun and Strauch, Emma (2020) "AwARe: Eliminating Implicit Bias using AR," *Frameless*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.rit.edu/frameless/vol3/iss1/1>

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AwARe: Eliminating Implicit Bias using AR

Cover Page Footnote

We wish to thank Dr. Zhen Bai, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, for her remarkable tutelage as supervisor of our project at the University of Rochester.

AwARe: Eliminating Implicit Bias using AR

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Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes we associate with others that affect our behaviors, actions and decisions without our conscious knowledge. We see examples of this in all realms and in all stages of life. For example, one study shows that when teachers in pre- school were asked to watch for troubling behaviors, they focused more on students of color than on white students (Gilliam, 2016).

Given how profound the impact of discriminatory behaviors is, there is no doubt that any institution, be it college or a workplace, could benefit from having its employees better understand implicit bias. The problem we noticed was that existing training is often not as effective as one would hope.

Our goal is to create an experience using AR that is intriguing (such that people want to try it), helps people become more aware of implicit biases, and uses empathy as a driver for pro-social behavior.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

“The essential difference between emotion and reason is that reason leads to conclusions while emotion leads to action” - Donald Calne, Neurologist

Our project is inspired by the “Make Some Room” workshop created by the design team at Publicis Sapient. Our proposed solution works in three stages:

1. **Marker based AR** to allow people to explore specific locations (reality aspect): We want to place AR markers all around campus that people walking around campus may be able to interact with. In an expansion of the project, we would like to incorporate a map of markers to create a “scavenger hunt” experience.
2. **Audio clips** about different persons experiences at that location (empathy aspect): We are interviewing multiple students and staff members on campus about moments when they experienced discrimination of any kind. Our goal is to record and edit these interviews (or transcribe them and record them in our voices) and place them in the locations where the incident occurred. The goal is to use storytelling as a way to evoke empathy.
3. **Call to action** - Finally, we wanted to provide an action focused element at the end. To do this, at the end of every clip that the user hears, they will be prompted to 1) describe what they think the storyteller was feeling and 2) come up with an idea for what they could do to help!

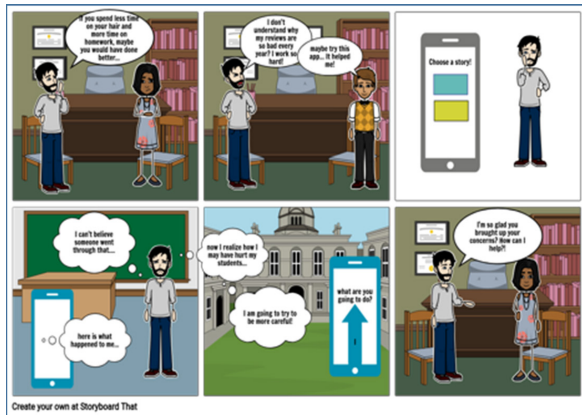


Fig. 1. Concept Storyboard.

We have chosen to use AR because we can leverage it to overlay objects on the environment in manner that makes bias feel more salient. AR is also more accessible and requires less hardware than a technology like Virtual Reality (VR). Our goal is to make the experience as frictionless as possible for users so that there is no frustration involved which may have unintended negative consequences.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we think that through AR, our app has the potential to make an impact in society. By combining real interviews of people with an easy-to-use AR interface, our application serves almost a similar function as that of an art installation. Its goal is to make the viewer uncomfortable, to push them out of their comfort zone, and start a meaningful dialogue about social change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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MEDIA

Fig 1. Concept Storyboard