



Innovation > Telecommunications > App turns text messages into face-to-face interactions with strangers

APP TURNS TEXT MESSAGES INTO FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Somebody app sends text messages not to the intended recipient, but to a nearby stranger who is tasked with finding them and delivering the message verbally.

Most of the products and services we write about on Springwise have a practical use or make a difficult task easier. However, every so often we come across an idea that actually serves to disrupt the most efficient ways of accomplishing a task in order to create a new experience. And that exactly describes a new app called [Somebody](#), which sends text messages not to the intended recipient, but to a nearby stranger who is tasked with finding them and delivering the message verbally.

Created by filmmaker and artist [Miranda July](#) with the help of production agency [Stink Digital](#), the app serves to bring about serendipitous interactions between people who don't know each other. Users first create a profile that includes a picture of themselves, and allow the app to use location service on their phone. They can send a message to any contact who also has the app, but it won't go directly to them. Instead, it logs the location of the friend and finds the nearest person to them who also has the Somebody app. The stranger receives the friend's profile photo and location and has to find them to deliver the message. The friend also gets a notification that somebody is looking for them with the message, along with the photo and location of the stranger. Once they've met up, the stranger can deliver the message and either leave or strike up a conversation with the recipient.

Users can add instructions to the message to make sure the stranger delivers it exactly right. If it's not a good time for the recipient to be interrupted by a stranger then they can postpone the message for another time. Strangers get rated by others based on the success of their mission and the passion with which they deliver messages, and senders can select either the nearest, highest rated or most interesting-looking person to deliver their message.

July created the video below to show some possible scenarios that Somebody could bring about, and it's well worth a watch:

Similar to apps like [PeekInToo](#), which enables users to see into the lives of anonymous broadcasters for 12 seconds at a time, Somebody helps create personal connections with people we might not otherwise meet. July describes the inventive concept as "the antithesis of the utilitarian efficiency that tech promises" and as "half-app/half-human". Are there other ways to subvert technology to emphasize the more human aspects of life?

10th September 2014

Email: info@stinkdigital.com

Website: www.somebodyapp.com

[Download PDF](#)