

GROUP 4-89

HELPING HANDS, CARING HEARTS

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INTRODUCTION

ISSUE

There is a need for the future generation of Singaporeans to be educated so that they are able to help shape a community that is more inclusive and understanding towards people with disabilities.

In the present day, the students of Hwa Chong Institution (HCI) often find themselves in situations where they have to interact with people with sensory disabilities.

Besides in community service programmes, students can encounter someone who has hearing or visual impairment in public spaces as well.

However, students are often caught at a loss of what to do, resulting in nervousness and awkwardness when interacting with people with disabilities. There are specific acts that students may take to help them make their interaction a less daunting experience, and educating them on these may help them approach people with disabilities with more confidence.

OBJECTIVES

There are 2 main objectives that we wish to achieve through our products:

1. Allow students to understand the lives of people with disabilities better, by
 - a. Clearing pre-existing doubts, assumptions and stereotypes, and
 - b. Spreading awareness about the difficulties faced by people with disabilities.
2. Assist students in communicating with people with disabilities, by
 - a. Teaching them specific acts to note during interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

How many people with disabilities are there in Singapore?

There are more than 600000 people with disabilities in Singapore, and people with sensory and physical disabilities make up half of the total population of people with disabilities in Singapore (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017).

How are people with disabilities treated like in Singapore?

64% of more than 1000 people polled said that they believe Singaporeans are willing to share public spaces with people with disabilities, but not interact with them.

Another study found that only 50% of parents of children without disabilities are comfortable with their children seating next to a child with disabilities in school (Lien Foundation, 2016)

Out of 1000 people with disabilities surveyed, 62% of them do not feel they are not included and accepted by society. They also feel that they are not given enough opportunities to contribute or reach their potential by society. (National Council of Social Service, 2016)

This suggests that there is a certain gap between people with and people without disabilities. People with disabilities are somewhat neglected by the rest of society, who are not comfortable being around them, and hence are hesitant in interacting with them.

Why is this gap present?

A Singaporean blogger cited that “‘Normal’ people may not take the first step to accepting disabled / special-needs people into their circle or community” (Jules of Singapore, 2016).

This can be due to people feeling lost or unsure of what to do when being with a person with disabilities. Knowing “what is expected [of oneself] without being offensive”, behaving “without being patronising or condescending” are some of the difficulties faced by Singaporeans who attempt to be empathetic. However, the lack

of understanding of the life of people with disabilities may hinder Singaporeans in being completely considerate. (Jules of Singapore, 2016)

Is this reflected in HCI?

56% of 57 students surveyed revealed that they faced challenges when communicating with people with disabilities. Some of the reasons cited include being nervous when approaching them, being clueless as to what should be done, and difficulty in communicating.

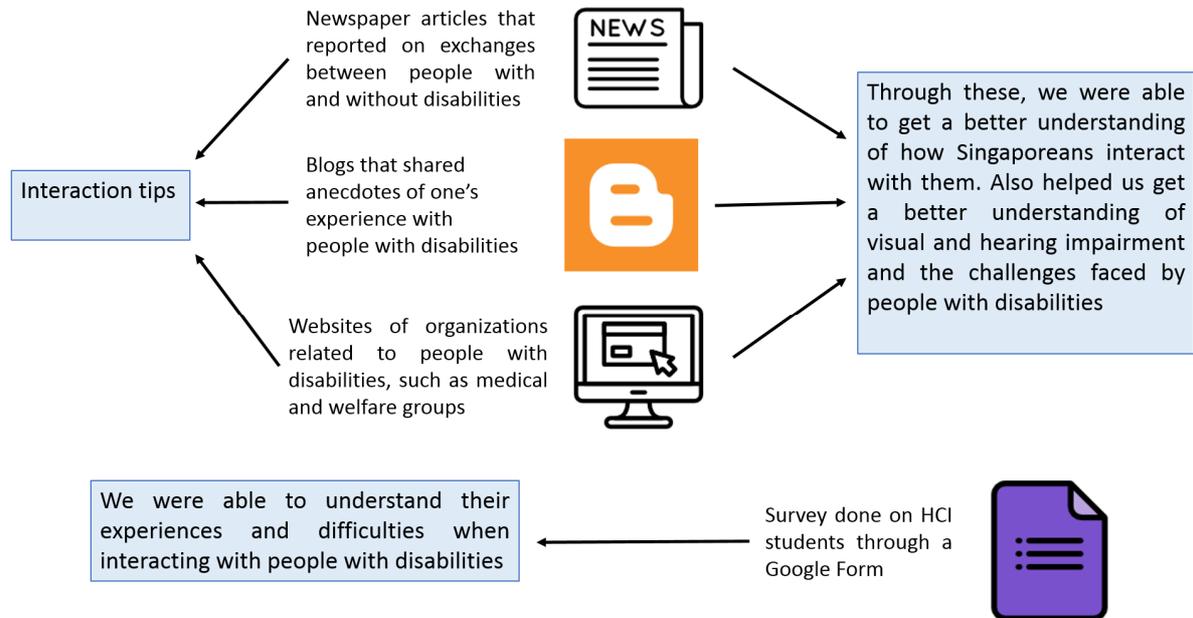
When asked about whether any preparations were made before attending volunteer programmes to help people with disabilities, most students indicated that they did not have time to do so, and did not know how they could better equip themselves to interact with people with disabilities. 13 students said that they mentally prepared themselves to be patient.

Evidently, students in HCI are not confident and certain in interacting with people with disabilities, adding on the fact that they are not able to prepare themselves adequately.

IDEATION AND METHODOLOGY

Research methods and Data gathering

The diagram below shows our sources of research findings and data.



We researched from three main types of sources, and compiled our own data through a survey.

All the information found was compiled, summarized and paraphrased for our own reference when creating our products.

Formation of ideas

Our team held a meeting during the March holidays to decide on the type of products to be created. We looked at our project objectives, and considered which products can best meet the respective goals.

We decided to create a website, where we can share information and store all our other products. A hardcopy booklet as well as complimentary videos and comics were the other products we decided on.

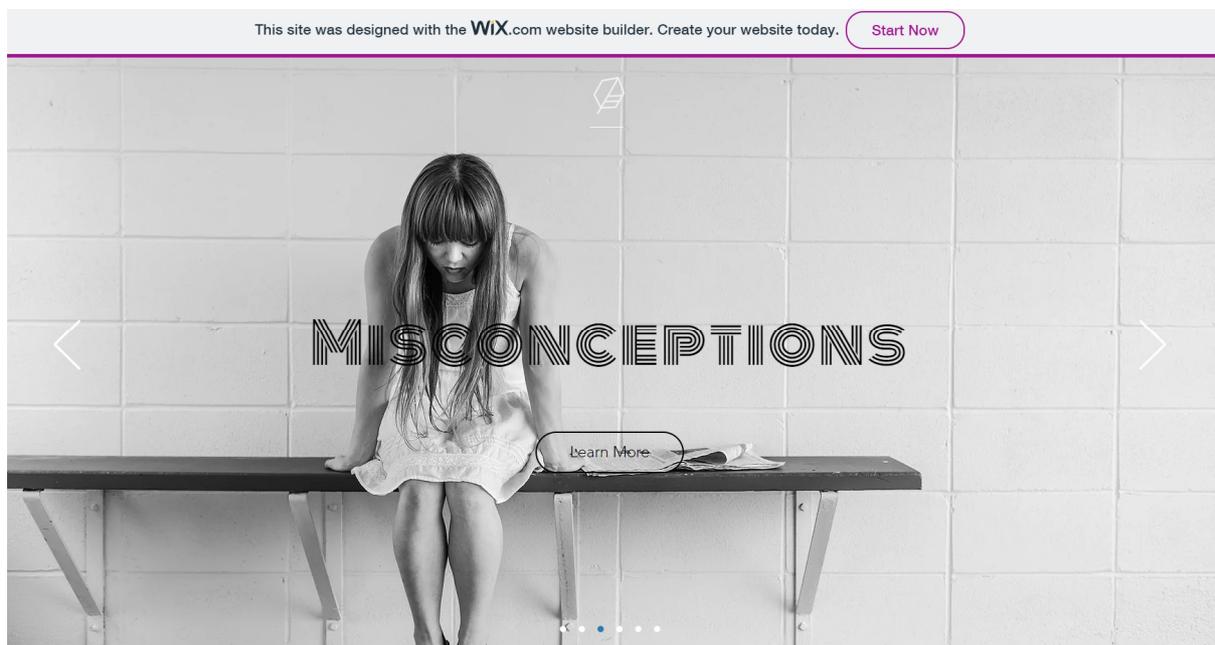
Methodology

After our ideas were formed, we distributed the workload such that each team member would be in charge of one product. We created our assigned products with reference to the earlier research done as well as existing online materials. We had meetings and discussions regularly to ensure that our products are relevant to the objectives in mind. Data gathering and content writing was done first, and the aesthetic aspect was taken into consideration after that.

PRODUCTS

Website

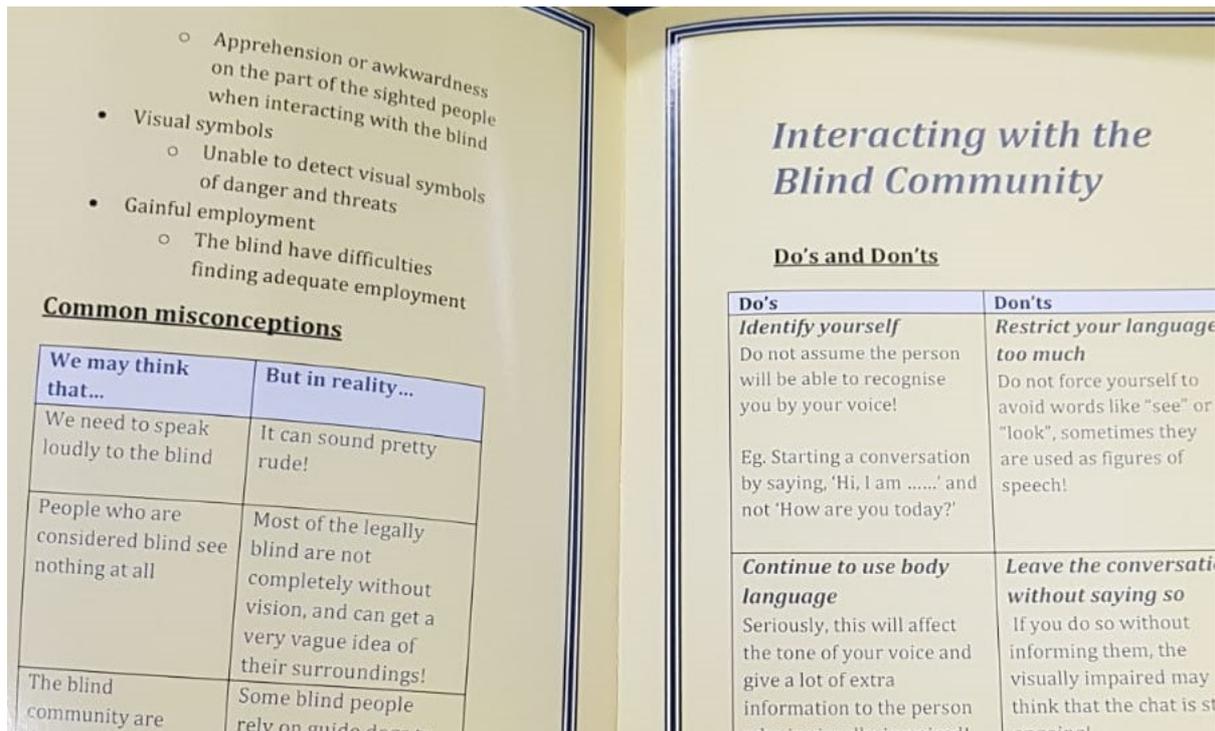
To make our website more user-friendly, we have organized our information such that it is easy to navigate and obtain. Infographics have been created so that knowledge may be shared in a more appealing manner. Additionally, we have also collated several activities that students can conduct with people with disabilities when engaging in community service. Our website, which also contains the rest of our products, can be accessed at: <https://laifujun.wixsite.com/isproject2018>.



One of the subpages of our website, which talks about misconceptions of the blind community.

Booklet

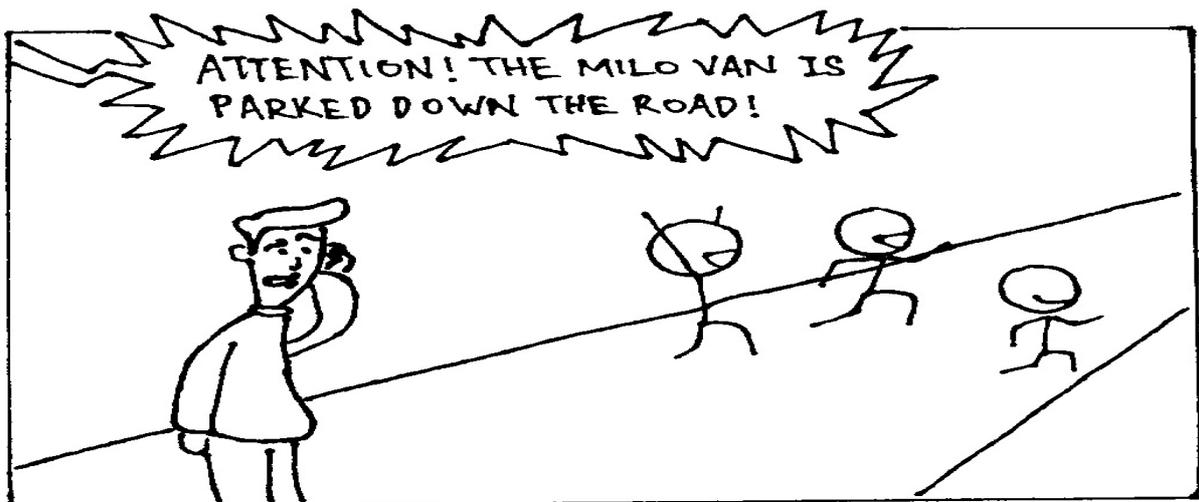
The hardcopy booklet contains summarized information from our website. It focuses on tips on interacting with people with disabilities, and serves as a crash course or refresher for students embarking on community service.



A few pages of our booklet which talks about the blind community.

Videos and comics

The tutorial videos and comics are created to illustrate the points in our website and booklet in a more attractive manner. Students can also visualize scenarios and tips more easily, and have a more lasting impression of what we share.

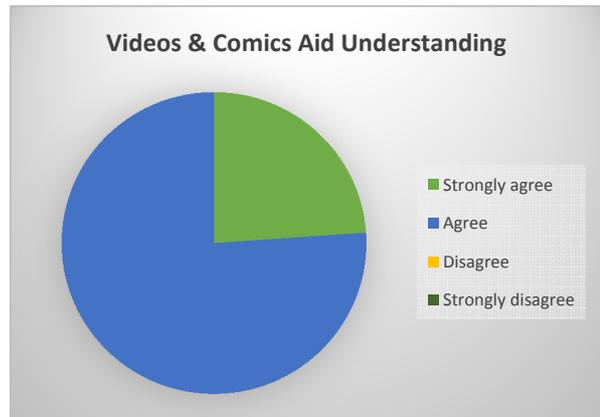
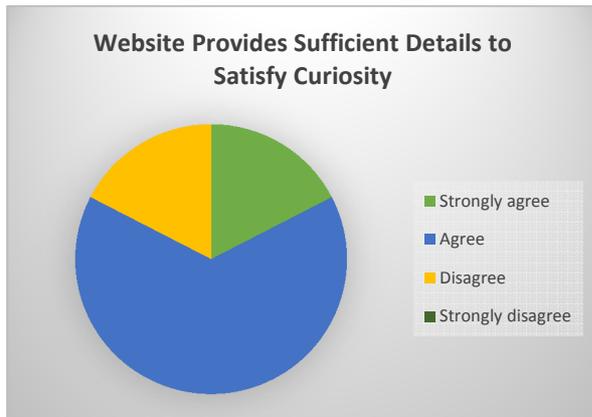
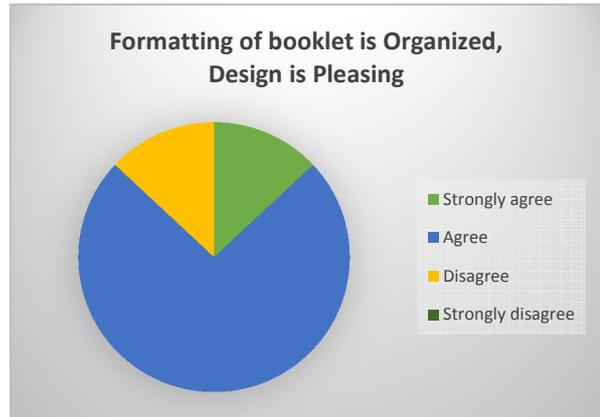
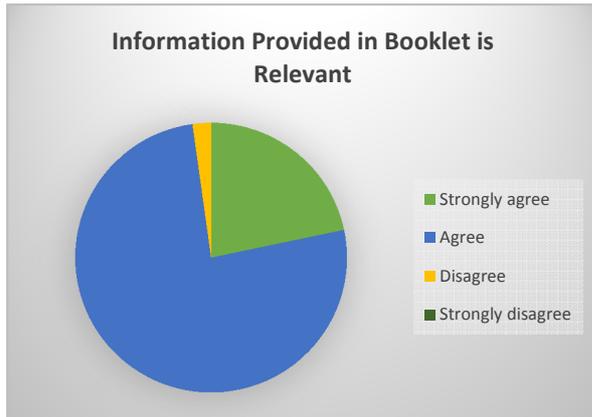


A comic to illustrate a challenge faced by the deaf community.

ANALYSIS

Pilot test findings

A pilot test of our products was conducted with 50 students across Secondary 1-4, before more improvements were made after which. The charts below show the findings from the test.



Responses from our pilot test show that our products are generally well-received.

We also contacted Project Vision and Project Hear Me Out, Service Learning groups working with associations for the blind and deaf respectively, to help us with our pilot test. They shared that our products were useful as beginner's guides, but could be improved by having a more appealing outlook to them.

Advantage of products

The diagram below summarizes the advantage of our products compared to other products available.

Type of product	Others	Us
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wordy pages - Blend and mundane outlook - Limited information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization and sectioning to spread out words! - Infographics for easy understanding! - Colourful and interactive pages! - Causes of disabilities, interaction tips, comics, videos, simulation activities and more, all in one place!
Booklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many are in the form of e-booklets, which are unusable without internet - Contain a lot of facts that may not be applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardcopy form, preferred by many! - Usable anytime, anywhere! - Well organized and clearly formatted! - Interaction tips, instantly applicable! - Scenarios to boost understanding!

Comparison of our products and similar products available.

Limitations of products

The diagram below shows the limitations of our products

Type of product	Limitations
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Although it is easy to move around and navigate, finding specific information in the website may be difficult
Booklet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Comics were not put in to make the booklet shorter
Videos and comics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Main points are highlighted in video, but audio may not be clear to all viewers- The video featuring Service Learning groups is slightly long- Comics were in black and white and some appeared pixelated on a screen

Shortcomings of our products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Website

One improvement that can be made to the website is to include a navigation pane, so that viewers can have an overview of all the subpages in the site. A search bar can also be considered if users are looking for specific keywords.

Booklet

The booklet could be redesigned such that the comics could be fitted in, whilst keeping the information. Organization and neatness may have to be compromised slightly.

Videos and comics

Better equipment could be used to improve video quality. Comics could be drawn using a computer to improve resolution and add colour.

CONCLUSION

Helping Hands, Caring Hearts has been a demanding project as it required long rigorous hours of researching, brainstorming and designing our products. One key skill we picked up was creativity, coming up with original ideas for the videos and comics. Our evaluation skills were put to the test when we had to categorize and condense loads of information into our website and booklet.

We feel that the most important takeaway from this project was learning more about the blind and deaf communities, and how we can interact with them with less difficulty and more confidence.

We hope that our project can make a difference among HCI students embarking on community service projects.

REFERENCES

The following works were cited in the course of this project:

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5. United Spinal Association. (n.d.) *Disability Etiquette - Interacting With People With Disabilities*. [On-Line]. Available:<https://www.unitedspinal.org/disability-etiquette/#speech>. Retrieved March 31, 2018.