

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA??!!

I've developed an interest in studying how society can benefit from an application that aids in improving our day-to-day habits that contribute to food and money waste.

When I was growing up, my household size was 7 individuals which led to an overstuffed refrigerator that became a breeding ground for mold and harmful bacteria that produced a stench so powerful you did not need to guess whether it was contaminating the foods that were still within their freshness windows of time and created embarrassment when opening it while guests were visiting. As a result, we had to throw away so much food that was purchased to carry us through a 2-week period; sometimes months would go by before we noticed food rotting in the fridge. Vast amounts of money was wasted on groceries that never made it to our bellies, and if it did, it was like rolling the dice on our health. I realize this was not just my family's problem but occurred in many households nationwide.

There are some studies that have been done and measures taken to mitigate this issue, but they still fall short of addressing the root causes of this problem. I have come up with what I believe is a solution that targets the heart of food waste due to the over-shopping of groceries and poor refrigeration habits that I believe will benefit a larger population – a technical design that can be integrated into Smart devices.

This design is called SmartScan. It is essentially and PLU code reader that would be a downloadable application that could upload the specifics about purchased groceries into a database and would as a result, assist with storing food properly, and more importantly, send notifications to user Smart phones/watches and user emails regarding upcoming expiration dates on the foods they scanned so they know which ones to prioritize eating. This will significantly reduce food waste and encourage people to prepare dinner at home when they might otherwise choose to dine out.