

Smart Charlottesville: Designing the Future  
(Technical Report)

Efforts toward Unity amid Disinformation and Division in the United States  
(STS Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis Portfolio  
Presented to the Faculty of the  
School of Engineering and Applied Science  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

by

Conner Hutson

May 5, 2020

## **Preface**

Diversity in beliefs, values, and ideas makes society rich and promotes innovation. How can we resist division and bring fragmented groups together for mutual benefit?

In and near Charlottesville, Virginia, the University of Virginia community, area residents, and local government bodies generally do not collaborate closely. The research team developed the Smart Charlottesville application as a platform to bridge divides between the university and the surrounding community. With the Python-based Django Web Framework, the team developed the full-stack web application, incorporating a PostgreSQL database. With access to this web-based program, each of these groups can strive to better themselves and their community.

More broadly, social polarization in the United States obstructs cooperative effort to manage common threats. Use and abuse of online media has exacerbated such divides. Four groups are resisting online disinformation: media organizations, independent investigative journalists, activist groups, and government agencies. Their efforts promote collaboration despite disunity.

## **List of Contents**

1. Preface
2. Technical Report: Smart Charlottesville: Designing the Future
3. STS Research Paper: Efforts toward Unity amid Disinformation and Division in the  
United States
4. Prospectus