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A guy approaches a woman at a club with flirtatious eyebrows at the ready. She brushes him off. He persists. She worries: What if he follows me home? She feels threatened but the situation has not yet risen to the level of a 911 emergency.

Now what?

Green Line Business Group, a Newark-based technology company, has designed a smartphone app to address just that type of situation. The app is called **Eye Need A Witness** and it allows anyone feeling threatened or harassed to call on other users in the network to give assistance or provide later testimony about an incident.

The company — a **2019 realLIST honoree** — stresses that the app is not a substitute for calling 911 or the police.

“We wanted to give the public something in-between,” said **Gabe Humphreys**, director of technology at Green Line. “If you feel you’re in a situation where you need to [call 911], we want you to do that.”

Nor is the company encouraging people to become vigilantes: Instead, it’s hoping that the app will help defuse a difficult situation.

“Sociological studies show that **people behave better when they know they’re being watched**,” he said.

Indeed, the app was created to assist individuals and groups that are frequent targets of harassment, including ethnic minorities and members of the LGBTQ community. Target markets include college campuses, houses of worship, schools and municipalities.

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The app creates a geographic network that allows users to share their GPS location with others in the network. When a user asks for help, anyone with the app within a five-mile radius receives the request and can agree to be a witness. The app provides turn-by-turn directions so that witnesses may go directly to the location of the incident. Event data such as audio, video or text notes can be included as well.

Users can also create a personal network by sharing their identification number with family and friends. These individuals will receive alerts regardless of the geographic location of the person sending out the alert.

Users' location information is shared only while the event is in progress. Event data is encrypted and securely stored and archived for future reference, including presentation to the courts. Only the person calling in the alert has access to the data.

The Eye Need A Witness dashboard allows administrative users and emergency personnel to monitor and vet community-wide alerts.

The app also features a "high-threat alert" which allows anyone to alert other users of serious events, such as active shooter, hostage, large fire or chemical spill situations so that they can avoid the area.

Humphreys stressed that the app is a work-in-progress, but that within a couple of weeks, he hopes to have livestream capabilities. He also hopes to give users the option of activating their personal networks without activating the public sphere — presently, all networks are notified of an alert. Humphreys also wants to extend the geographical range of an alert, or if no response is given, to have it go to the next 500 or 1,000 users.

"We're trying to make society more civil," said Humphreys. "We're trying to hold accountable those who would abuse their physical stature or their position in society."

The app is being offered free for one year to Delaware residents who enter "DEStrong" at sign-up. Otherwise, the cost is \$10 per year per user.

