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Project Proposal:

One group facing issues of accessibility is that of long-term hospital patients, particularly children. Often bedridden, and even placed in stricter isolation, these people face a strong sense of social isolation, only able to interact with staff, family, and other patients, and sometimes only a subset of these. This makes it difficult for them to form friendships, tying in with issues of loneliness and depression, and can also prevent normal social development. Many technological avenues exist for communication, including some such as Facebook, text messaging, and other similar applications. However, built for a more general audience, these do not assist children in this group in connecting, and do not directly address issues such as HIPAA, to both protect privacy, but still allow patients to connect with and support each other. One possible solution to this problem could be a social networking application specifically designed for and targeting long-term care patients (particularly or possibly exclusively for children). This could take the form of a single network within individual hospitals, that adds the sense of physical proximity, or also a larger network among hospitals, allowing connections with and support from patients around the world.