

SAMARITANS LAUNCHES GROUND-BREAKING TWITTER APP TO IDENTIFY VULNERABLE PEOPLE ONLINE

#SamaritansRadar

Monday 27 October 2014

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 HOURS WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2014

Samaritans, the leading suicide prevention charity, today (29/10/14) is launching **Samaritans Radar** - a free web application that monitors your friends' Tweets, alerting you if it spots anyone who may be struggling to cope. The app gives users a second chance to see potentially worrying Tweets, which might have otherwise been missed.

Created by digitally-led creative agency Jam using Twitter's API, Samaritans Radar uses a specially designed algorithm that looks for specific keywords and phrases within a Tweet. It then sends an email alert to the user with a link to the Tweet it has detected, and offers guidance on the best way of reaching out and providing support. The app is completely free and activated in just two steps from the website www.samaritansradar.org. All alerts are sent to the subscriber's email address directly – never to their Twitter followers - and Radar doesn't post to Twitter on the subscriber's behalf.

Twitter is supporting the launch of Samaritans Radar as part of its global *Twitter Ads for Good* programme. The launch of Samaritans Radar runs alongside a wider collaboration between Twitter and Samaritans which includes a referral process for potentially vulnerable people on Twitter to Samaritans helpline.

While the app is aimed at anyone using Twitter, Samaritans and Jam identified the key audience for Samaritans Radar as the 'Millennials' group – otherwise known as Generation Y – which typically includes 18-35 year olds. They are the most active age group across social platforms, and spend an average of just over three hours daily on social networks.

Samaritans and Jam worked together to produce a short film about the app, which demonstrates the role Samaritans Radar plays among millennials. The video was directed by Oliver Goodrum for Irresistible Films. Goodrum is an award-winning director, whose work has previously been long listed for BAFTA and BIFA awards, and broadcast on Channel 4 and 4OD. The film can be viewed online at www.samaritansradar.org

The development of Samaritans Radar follows research which showed that:

- Twitter is [also] used for keeping in touch with friends and colleagues, sharing interesting information within one's network, seeking help and opinions, and releasing emotional stress. (Elrich & Shami, 2010; Zhao & Rosson, 2009)¹
- Social media feeds can be effective indicators of real world performance.
- Twitter [...] has a high user base and is a platform of personal expression.

Joe Ferns, Executive Director of Policy, Research & Development at Samaritans, says: "We know that people struggling to cope often go online looking for support. By not addressing this issue we

¹ Johnston, K., Chan, M.M & Hauman, M. (2013) Use, Perception and Attitude of University Students Towards Facebook and Twitter. *The Electronic Journal Information Systems Evaluation*, 16, 3, 201-211

run the risk of shutting these discussions down and driving them underground. Instead we need to use tools such as Samaritans Radar to encourage people to look out for one another online, helping them to reach out and offer support. We really couldn't have done this work without Jam and we are grateful to them for giving their time and expertise to help such a great initiative."

Richard Costa Dsa, Managing Director of Jam, says: "We're incredibly proud of Samaritans Radar and the potential impact it could have helping save lives. Often social media platforms, like Twitter, have been misused for trolling but Samaritans Radar, a tool for good, demonstrates the positive power of a connected network. It really has been a passion project for the team at Jam and a real pleasure working closely with the Samaritans team over the last twelve months."

Patricia Cartes, Twitter's Global Head of Trust and Safety Outreach, said: "We are delighted to see Samaritans using Twitter to create the Samaritans Radar app. Twitter actively forges partnerships with organisations in the field of online safety and digital citizenship, and Samaritans has a longstanding reputation for supporting people in times of need. It is fantastic to see them extending this expertise and experimenting with new ways of supporting people in the digital space."

– ENDS –

For more information about the work of Samaritans, or about Radar, please contact Vicky Hartley in the Samaritans Press Office on 020 8394 8300 or email press@samaritans.org

Notes to editors:

- Samaritans is available round the clock, every single day of the year. We provide a safe place for anyone struggling to cope, whoever they are, however they feel, whatever life has done to them. Please call 08457 90 90 90 (UK) 116 123 (ROI), email jo@samaritans.org, or visit www.samaritans.org to find details of the nearest branch.

Samaritans Radar credits:

Agency: Jam

Creatives: James Greening and Joel Lim

Producer: Katie Hall

Planner: Simon McEvoy

Developer: Anjana Hewage

Creative Technologist: Liam Chapman

Lead Creative Technologist: Michael Namen

Head Of Marketing: Katie Graham

Designers: June Frangue and Thom Stoodley

Samaritans Project Manager: Jennifer Russell

Samaritans Press & PR Manager: Salimah Lalji

Samaritans Executive Director of Policy, Research and Development: Joe Ferns

Film credits:

Creatives: Dan Gorlov, Julia Taylor, James Greening and Joel Lim

Director: Oli Goodrum

Agency Producers: Katie Hall, Jo Dillon and Felicity Cruickshank

Samaritans Project Manager: Jennifer Russell

Samaritans Press & PR Manager: Salimah Lalji

Producer: Connor Hollman

Production Company: Irresistable Films

Post Production: Unit