

## Freshman's New App Hopes to Inspire Global Conversation

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Asad Malik '19, a freshman at Bennington College, is co-creator of a new app that hopes to create a global "connected mind" when users share their thoughts and ideas.

Users can create and upload short audio files, and each day the app's creators will choose twenty of the most interesting to share. The name they chose for the app, Noema, is a Greek word that means "something to think about," and the creators hope that it will provoke thoughtful conversation.

Noema emerged out of work that Malik and his collaborator, Lars Laichter, did while high school students in the Netherlands. Malik, who is from Pakistan, and Laichter, who is Czech, were inspired in part by the diversity of cultures at their high school.

In an article that appeared on September 26, 2015 in the *Rutland Herald*, Malik says that this experience highlighted for him the importance of storytelling to advance cultural understanding.

The project began as an attempt to create a robot that users would be able to customize with distinct personalities.

After consultation with potential investors, the duo decided to set aside the hardware component and develop the software as a stand-alone app.

While at Bennington, Malik plans to study cyborg anthropology, a new field that looks at the interaction of technology and human culture, and uses technology to extend the human lifespan.