(12 pts – 20-30 minutes) Projects and Tradeoffs. Briefly describe two tradeoffs your group made in doing your mini-project. For each, what was the choice, and how did you make it? This could be about any aspect of the project, from topic/domain choice to choosing data collection and analysis methods to specific issues around designs to how you thought about which design was most interesting. As usual, refer to specific ideas from class/readings as part of your discussion. (Note: this is not to be discussed with your group members, although we understand there is likely to be some overlap in your answers.)

Tradeoff 1 - Data Collection:

Our group opted to use widely distributed surveys as a our central means of data gathering. The surveys were largely quantitative, and there is certainly possible that more involved gathering processes - for example interviews - could have supplied us with information we may have missed. The reason we did not do this is that we believed both college students and landlords were far more likely to respond to a simple survey than to allow us to call and talk to them for prolonged periods of time. Also, since we were asking some rather sensitive questions we hoped the anonymity of the survey would lead to more honest answers; hard to say if this worked though, given the advertisement-styled landlord responses. An added benefit is that this quantitative data was easy to analyze.

Tradeoff 2 - Stationary Design:

We decided relatively early on in the process of solution designs that our tools would be stationary, that they would be fixed objects in the properties of both the landlord and the tenants as opposed to mobile devices or applications. This decision was made because although our designs utilized and in fact relied on intrusiveness, we decided that for the tenant a system built into the rented property made the most sense, as nearly all complaints and requests would be made from there. For the landlord, we simply stuck to this partly for simplicity, though also because our goal was to approach the problem from a new angle, and our data showed that people would already call their landlords, so a system that pinged them from a distance wouldn’t really change things much.

Short & sweet!