Ethical Implications

Answer the following questions. In your answers, please distinguish which implications follow from your *conceptual* design and which follow from your *UI* design.

1. **Did you make cultural or other assumptions about your users that affect how they interact with Fritter?**

Yes. A significant assumption I made about users as I designed the UI is that they are at least somewhat familiar with common social media sites, particularly Twitter and Google. The icons I used would be immediately understood by any users of social media sites, e.g. the "like" and "edit" icons, but they could prove to be unintelligible to someone who is new to the realm of social media, especially because I include no textual labels for the icons.

2. **Would an effective use of design heuristics to maximize engagement with Fritter be manipulative?**

Yes, I believe that designing the user interface to be maximally engaging is at its core seeking to manipulate users to interact more times and/or for a longer period of time. I think that there is a distinction between making an interface easier to understand and usable compared to making an interface "maximally" engaging. I think the latter is manipulative because it has gone past the point of providing functionality and is furthering a purpose of increasing time spent on the application, which the user does not necessarily consent to or is aware of when using the application.

3. **How would you adjust your design if your only goal were to: get children addicted to Fritter? or make it hard for older people to use Fritter? or stop fake news spreading? or prevent harassment? How, if at all, do your answers to these questions inform how you would actually design Fritter?**

I think that getting children addicted to Fritter would center mostly on visual design decisions of the UI, such as using large buttons, bright colors, and fun animations, so that the app is appealing and attractive to kids. To make the design harder to use for older people, I would again rely on UI design, and I would minimize the size of the buttons and text, so that interacting with the app is more difficult for the elderly, who tend to have poorer dexterity and vision. To prevent fake news spreading, this would require the introduction of new concept designs, e.g. fake news alerts, and/or automatic censorship of Freets. To prevent harassment, a similar change in concept design would need to occur – for example, a concept for censorship based on Freet content and a "reporting" harmful content concept. These answers would inform how I design Fritter

because there are clear outcomes that I want to avoid, and that I actively need to add to the application. It is not enough to avoid harmful design in what already exists, but it's also necessary to actively incorporate beneficial design concepts.

4. **You have the option to allow users to see which other users have upvoted a Freet. What forms of engagement between users (positive or negative) would be encouraged by allowing this?**

With this option, any user would be able to see which users liked which Freets. This would allow users to identify who supports a given Freet (or its author), and this could lead to both positive or negative engagement. A possible positive engagement would be if the user found that another user "liked" a Freet of a band that they both like. The first user could then reach out and find a fellow fan to be friends with. Thus, this feature could encourage users to find like-minded users. A possible negative engagement would be a user finds that their friend "liked" a political Freet that the first user disagrees with. This public knowledge could result in a confrontation, argument, and splintering of friendship. Thus, this feature could encourage users to witch-hunt or judge other people.

5. **In A3, we asked about stakeholders who aren't your immediate users. Identify a design choice you faced that would benefit or harm such a stakeholder, and explain how.**

A conceptual design flaw of my application is that there is no "verification" concept. Any user can sign up with any username, and thus impersonate as someone who is not on the application. This would harm the stakeholder who is not an immediate user, and they would not become aware of this impersonation, unless someone who is on the app informs them. The user who is masquerading could publish offensive Freets, which might have punishing consequences for that person, such as losing their job if their employer finds these Freets.

6. **What are the accessibility implications of your design for people with different abilities?**

In reflection, I think that my UI design is not inclusive for users who use screen readers, i.e. those with vision disabilities. Much of the functionality only uses icons to convey information about actions; however, I don't think this is conducive to screen readers, which rely on text to convert to speech. This means that my application wouldn't be usable to those with vision disabilities, unless I provide textual alternatives to the icons. There are also many other accessibility concerns that I have not even begun to think of

such as seizure concerns and input modalities, as I'm looking at W3's guide to website accessibility.

7. **One of the heuristics is to "speak the user's language." In retrospect, assuming you followed this, can you identify what kind of user you had in mind?**

The user that I had in mind as I designed the UI was an English-speaking American user who is acquainted with social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook. I hadn't thought that users might be Freeting in different languages, or be from around the world, and as such have different cultural understandings of the icons on the UI. I also realized that I assumed that the user would be close to my age, and would have similar abilities to me, and a similar competency with using the internet.