Please Un-Ignore Me

Group 8: Mikael Korsholm Poulsen, Nicoline Due Smedegaard, Cathrine Vilain Dybro, Johannes Wigh-Poulsen, Mathias Zykowski Ox Tvilling

Our vision

Likes, shares and comments on the Internet have become a part of everyday communication. One of the most popular webpages to share posts and expressing your opinions on is on Facebook. This is the largest social media platform and it has millions of users from all around the world all of different ages.

The interface of Facebook is filled with different kinds of metrics that shows how many likes, shares and comments a post has. In our group we find it very interesting why Facebook choose to show some metrics and why there are some they choose to hide from the users. Therefore we have chosen to take inspiration from Facebook and make our own version for our final project.

In our project "Please Un-Ignore Me" we want to show the metrics are not normally shown on the Facebook interface. This means the user of the project will for example receive a notification every time someone ignores one of the users posts.

The focus of our project is to create a program to raise awareness regarding the massive amount of metrics users are confronted with everyday on social media. For our project we are going to focus on Facebook and we want to change the user experience, and see what difference it would make if the user of a program is not only being shown the positive metrics but are confronted with the hidden metrics that for some people may be unsettling to see as well.

If Facebook was changed in the way we described above, the daily use and interactions within Facebook would also change dramatically. Instead of making your presence known by liking posts you would de-mask yourself just by looking at a posts. If you scroll past a post the creator of the post would get a notification like this; "someone ignored your post". Instead of only being able to see who likes your post, you'll be able to see exactly how many of your

friends who just don't seem to care. In 2018 people are already very much aware of how many likes they get. If you care a great deal about likes you might wonder why not so many of your friends has liked your post. But then you might reassure yourself thinking; "maybe they simply haven't seen my post". With our idea you wouldn't be able to reassure yourself, while constantly being reminded of how much your posts are being ignored. You can't even get actual likes, but you can get "unignored". This might be somewhat satisfactory, but we can imagine that it won't feel as good as getting an actual like. That's one side of it. When you're interacting with the media, you are the one scrolling past posts or hitting "unignore" button. How would it make you feel that your friends know when you're ignoring their posts? Would you simply not care, or would you feel guilted into "unignoring" your friends posts? We think it is interesting how showing different metrics can change your perception of Facebook and the way it affects you. We doubt that people would want to use our idea, but it is not meant to be functional. It is meant to raise awareness about how carefully orchestrated Facebook actually is.

Texts and theory to support our project

In the following section we will outline the different theories and writers that we find interesting in relation to our project.

In the text "the like economy", authors Carolin Gerlitz and Anne Helmond conceptualizes the interactions made on social networks and beyond such as Facebook (and the plug-ins they offer) as an online "like economy". Relevant to our work is the idea, that the transformation of interactions into metrics generates more engagement and traffic:

> *"In this Like economy, the social is of particular economic value, as user interactions are instantly transformed into comparable forms of data and presented to other users in a way that generates more traffic and engagement. "* Page 1349

In inverting the metrics shown to the user in the Facebook interface, we might also see an opposite reaction in terms of generating traffic. The constant reminder of being ignored or

scrolled by might create either an intensive hunt for relevancy, through increased engagement and activity for exposure. It might also provoke an opposite reaction, a lack of want for engagement, and a decrease in activity. If the user feels unimportant or ignored, the joy of interacting with social networks might disappear altogether, proving the importance of metrics.

Button - Søren Pold in Software Studies, 2008

 The notion of the button as a political/cultural tool presented by Søren Pold in the text "button" seems fitting to describe the importance of the Like button on Facebook. Instead of the like button representing something positive for the user, a form of recognition, it comes (through our modifications) to represent something entirely different, which might contribute to shift the entire way in which Facebook is used.

What do metrics want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook - Benjamin Glosser, 2014

Our program is mainly influences by the ideas presented by Benjamin Grosser. Benjamin Grosser addresses, how important metrics is for the behaviour on Facebook. He creates an extension for the web browser which hides all the metrics on Facebook. After having some people trying out the program, he got responses about how it changed the user's behaviour. One of the respondents wrote:

> *"I found myself not [wanting] to comment on things as often because I wouldn't know if it had a lot of comments or likes already."109 This is because he didn't want to be one of the only people to like something that turned out to be unpopular''*

The foundation of metrics, as he explains, is to empower the desire of notifications, in form of likes, comments and messages. This desire is based on the assumption that we all have this neo-liberal ideology inside us, which makes us desire more and more and never having enough.

Our program will focus on the other aspect of the metrics. We want the make them even more extreme and visualize the metrics as much as possible. We have an assumption that most posts have a surplus of people scrolling past them, then people actually liking and commenting (reacting). By letting the post visualize the number of people scrolling by, it will address the negative part of the neo-liberal tendencies of wanting more. Facebook is generally a platform which, accordingly to Benjamin Grosser, pushes us to generate more content and stay active in order to achieve more notifications. This notion is something we'll try to confront with this program.

Goriunova, Olga. Fun and Software: Exploring Pleasure, Paradox and Pain in Computing. Bloomsbury Academic, 2014

Olga Goriunova addresses fun as a vital part of technology. Fun makes us lose sense of time and space and further investigate a program. This will push the engagement of the user and pushes them to become more critical.

''Fun in computing as a mode of thinking, making, experiencing is about a mode of reasoning, and as such it convolutes the question of rationalism, the qualities of logical reasoning, the autonomy of computation and relates to the sensibilities and creative drives of computing" p.4

Can this program program address the notion of fun and how? Can we make it fun to be active and will the feeling of pressure force the user to play the ''facebook-game'' of un-ignoring and commenting?

The Technical Plan for Our Project

Essential to our program is the layout of the page and its similarity to the layout of Facebook. To achieve this look we can either screen capture parts of a Facebook-page onto the page or try to recreate something similar through simple JavaScript. Creating it through captures and editing those would obviously achieve a very similar style, but it will be less flexible when it comes to what computer is displaying the project. Creating it through simple JavaScript would be more complex but we could make it adapt to the computer used.
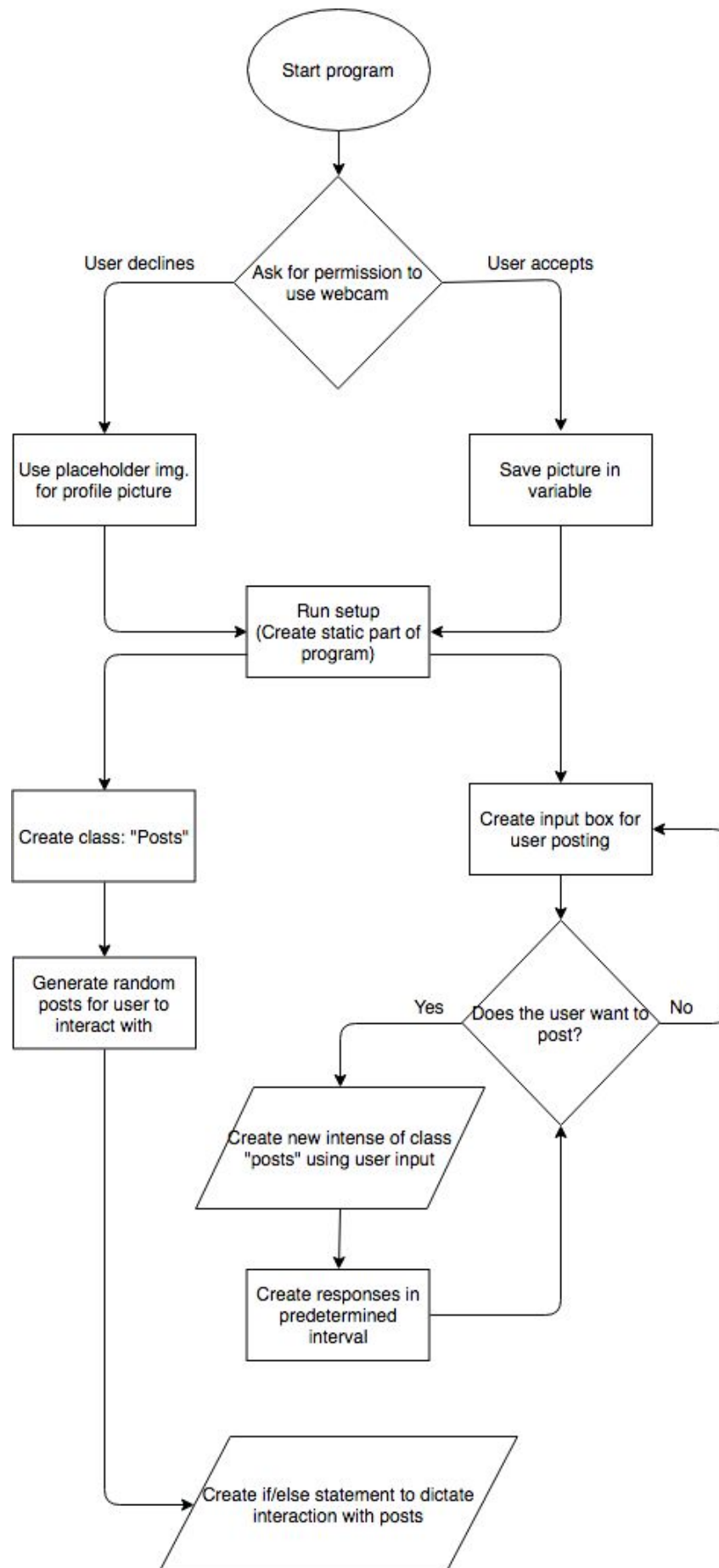
A part of this interface would be the classic profile picture in the top right corner and we want this to be a picture taken with through the users webcam since this make the user understand that this is a simulation of their own social media feed.

Our project has two major instances of interaction and creating these would be the biggest challenge in this project. The first interaction is the users ability to interact with the "posts" that appear on the page at launch. This could be made with a simple mousePressed() function, but it is less likely to mess up if we make the "posts" sprites in p5.play and make them clickable through that. The second interaction is the users ability to create a "post" themselves. This will probably be achievable through a classic HTML-input bar with the only challenge being how to get it to push down previous posts. We want the user to experience receiving different notifications regarding their "posts" progress and how other people are reacting to it. These notifications will probably be randomly generated a specific time after the user has created a post.

A big challenge in creating this is making it generative so that interacting with it is a different experience each time. This will be achievable through implementing enough randomness in the creation of both posts and notifications.

Flowchart
Below is our flowchart in which we have tried to map out the process of our project in a understandable manner. It is written as a visualization of the projects process and not as an example of user interaction.

```
                        ┌─────────────┐
                        │Start program│
                        └──────┬──────┘
                               │
                               ▼
      User declines      ◇ Ask for permission ◇      User accepts
    ┌───────────────────    to use webcam    ───────────────────┐
    │                                                            │
    ▼                                                            ▼
┌──────────────────┐                                    ┌──────────────────┐
│Use placeholder   │                                    │Save picture in   │
│img. for profile  │                                    │variable          │
│picture           │                                    └──────────────────┘
└──────────────────┘                                            │
    │                    ┌─────────────────────┐                │
    └───────────────────▶│Run setup            │◀───────────────┘
                         │(Create static part  │
                         │of program)          │
                         └─────────────────────┘
```

Start program

Ask for permission to use webcam — User declines / User accepts

Use placeholder img. for profile picture

Save picture in variable

Run setup (Create static part of program)

Create class: "Posts"

Generate random posts for user to interact with

Create input box for user posting

Does the user want to post? — Yes / No

Create new intense of class "posts" using user input

Create responses in predetermined interval

Create if/else statement to dictate interaction with posts

Referencelist:

Glosser, B. 2014, "What do metrics want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook"

Pold, Søren, 2008 "Button" in Software Studies.

Goriunova, Olga. 2014, Fun and Software: "Exploring Pleasure, Paradox and Pain in Computing. Bloomsbury Academic"

Gerlitz, C. & Helmond, A. 2013, "The like economy: Social buttons and the data-intensive web".