HCI 2018 – Assignment 2 Cover Sheet: Design Concept through Paper Prototype

Complete this cover sheet and include it as the first page in your submission. Please review the yellow form for more details regarding assignment originality. The assignment is an electronic submission on Moodle.

Section 1.1 Personal Details

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Course enrolled:

Enrolled tutorial Details (Eg. Day: Wed; Time: 09):

☒ COMP3511

Day Wed Time: 16

☐ COMP9511

Section 1.2 Declaration

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Section 1.3 Assessment: Tutor Use ONLY

Reflection on the User Centred Design Process (Lessons learnt, benefits of process, effectiveness of process)	/15
Comparison of Mobile/Desktop design techniques	/12
Overall Presentation (includes grammar, layout, referencing and use of Usability terminology)	/6
Total	/33
Comments	

Reflect, individually, on the steps and outcomes carried out above and reflect on the user centred design process. You will also discuss how you would design differently for a desktop computer versus a mobile device and the advantages and disadvantages of each type of device. What would you do differently to accommodate for the mobile design in this cycle? Try and relate your discussion to a real-world context.

Throughout the entire user-centred design process, many important values were learnt, and overall, I have been taught on how to design for a user. Initially I had always thought that the idea is the make or break point for any application, completely disregarding the user from the process. However now I have learnt that, what makes a product successful is when the product is tailored towards the users, through constant refining and improvement.

Initially we had thought of the idea for the product after brainstorming, however the design of the product was a mystery, and the group was unable to pin point key features and what our user base had wanted. We had learnt that through the use of questionnaires, context scenarios and interviews with representatives of our users we were able to know exactly what our users were interested in, and what the user's thought was redundant, and unnecessary.

Knowing this information, we were able to construct a simple paper prototype that allowed us to see basic user interaction with a skeleton of our application. Upon performing usability tests on users, I had learnt it was very hard not to tell users what to do, however this had opened many key ideas to me that despite something seeming intuitive to me, it may not have been so obvious to others. The usability tests allowed us to see, how users interacted with the product, what stood out to the users, what they would have liked to see and allowed us to see how our target audience would likely interact with the application. Upon performing our usability tests, we had refined our product into a final prototype, and also began working on an electronic prototype.

Throughout the entire process, we encouraged ourselves to ask our users questions we may have regarding the design, rather than going in circles amongst ourselves on what we think is best. This allowed us to tailor an application for our users from the initial design process. The most important thing learnt from the whole process was that we never really know what is best for our user base without asking them, and any idea or product that aims to be successful must constantly keep the user close in each stage of the design process.

When designing for a mobile application compared to desktop application, the two designs will be very differing as there is different screen real-estate, context of use, and portability to consider for each case. In a mobile themed design, since the screen space is a lot more limited, key features must be highlighted and extra features would be hidden behind menus (typically flat menus or hamburger menus). Mobile applications tend to be used on the move, and typically the application would need to be more compacted and quickly deliver information and feedback. However considering our application had a much larger screen real-estate and wasn't intended as a more portable application we were able to fit more features and leave more considerable white space.

If we had to design our application for mobile users, we would have to refactor many of our feature placements, change the size of elements on the screen, compacting information into a much more condensed form, and consider omitting some features, such as certain statistics. This would all be done with user feedback in mind and maintain the core features of a user-centred design process.

Advantages of a mobile design includes a more minimalistic design, only keeping core features of the application, and a more portable application that can be used on the go, however this comes at the cost of less screen real-estate, and more limited features.

Advantages of a desktop design includes a more feature packed application, more room to allow for white-spacing and neutral elements, larger screen real-estate allowing for more freedom of design, easier navigation and allowing a larger user base, since all computers can have the same application running consistently despite the browser used. Whereas a mobile application can only be developed for a certain phone OS. However, this comes with the cost of less portability, and a more difficult testing process as running a test on mobile is easier to conduct in comparison to a desktop computer application due to the size of a mobile phone and view we can have over the user interaction.

Both mobile and desktop computer applications have their use and we need to conduct research on the user base, and receive constant feedback from users before deciding which type of application to develop. In a real word scenario, a mobile application would be used when outside, or moving around so putting too much information would put too much

cognitive load, whereas desktop applications are used when a user is placed seated on a desk in front of a screen at a fixed position allowing more focus on the application itself.

The positive aspects of the design process include, developing an application that is more fitted to a certain user-base rather than performing guess and check work. Through the constant refinement and iterations, we are able to develop a much more polished application for launch that has been thoroughly tested. The process also allows us to closely work with our target users and really get to understand the needs of our users.

The negative aspects of the design process include, requiring a large amount of testing which in a business sense would be very expensive. it is also difficult to replicate as in each situation the representative user base may be different. In the time frame provided for this assignment, we weren't able to perform many iterations and the quality of each step had to be reduced in order to meet the date of submission.

Thinking of the product in the shoes of the user, and attempting to create context scenarios really allowed me to try and let go of my ideas and beliefs and attempt to think like my target user. If I were to perform this process again, I would personally perform more iterations across the process, as the more iterations, the higher the quality of the final product. I would also attempt to connect and perform testings on a larger number of users.

Teamwork skills were essential and this assignment had taught me that a well-co-ordinated and communicating team can accomplish much more, despite all people in the team having differing views and opinions, we had to see the product through the same eyes in order to work towards a common goal.

Overall regardless of the application, platform and team, the target user must be kept at the centre of the design process, and when keeping the user at the centre, it allows for better team work, and a more successful application.