Homework week1
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Question 1: What gap in the user experience can you infer from the app's functionality? Define this gap or problem very precisely. Is this problem uniquely solved by a mobile app? Or are there websites that provide a solution to the same problem? In other words, what is the added value of providing it as an app?

I have chosen the app UNTAPPD. The gap that this app fills is that it allows the user to easily share and socially explore the world of beer. It offers you a sneak peek into your friend's favourite beers as well as that it offers you suggestions based on your beer preference. Lastly it keeps track of the beers that you have checked in such that you have some sort of diary in which you can trace back the beers you have been drinking over the past years.

In addition to a mobile app, UNTAPPD also offers a web platform. Furthermore, there are other web platforms available with a similar mission. The added value of a mobile app such as UNTAPPD is the ease of use. The added value of UNTAPPD as compared to its competitors is probably its very large user base; the chances of interaction with buddies over beer through UNTAPPD are much higher than having the same sort of interaction through other beer apps. Wherever you go, you will have your smartphone with you. Whenever you consume a beer, the taste of it still fresh in your mouth such that you are better able to evaluate it and more likely to do so. Likewise, UNTAPPD offers beer suggestions at the spot; looking at your smartphone app UNTAPPD my give you great suggestions on which beer to consume in a given bar. All in all, the advantage of a smartphone app like UNTAPPD over a web platform stems from the fact that it is much easier to use.

Question 2: Do you think the designer really understands the problem? What are clues in the app's functionality to evidence presence or absence of understanding?

In general I think the designer has a good grasp of the problem. When opening up the app, most of the core functionalities are directly accessible through button. Also, you directly gain access to an activity feed that portrays the recent endeavours of the user's friends.

One big cue in the design of the app that reveals a lack of understanding stems from the images used on the buttons. They are not always very clear. Also, when clicking on them, you don't gain access to a title / description that explains the core functionality present under this button. This makes it hard to initially explore the app.

Another cue of the lack of understanding stems from the abundance of buttons. There are some buttons that have a lot of functionality in common. For instance, you have both a "message" button and an "activity" button. The message button shows the activity of your social interactions. The activity button communicates the UNTAPPD news and conveys other notifications. This all could easily be incorporated into 1 activity board. By including some easy to use filters, the user would be enabled to filter out the categories that are interesting for him or her.

Questions 3: What market segments can you define for this app? In other words, does it serve different kinds of people? Which are these?

The app's audience in my opinion contains the following groups:

- Beer aficionados
- Travellers / backpackers
- Cafes and bars
- (micro) breweries
- Big brewing companies

The first group is obvious. The app allows people who like beer to store their beer drinking history and in turn offer them advice on which beers they may like as well. The second group is part of its segment because the app offers locally customized suggestions on where to go for certain beer. As a backpacker who likes beer, you'll receive good suggestions on which places to visit to try all sorts of different local beers. The third group pertains to the segment but for different reasons. Of course a market has both a demand side, as exemplified by the first two groups, and a supply side. The app offers customized suggestions to consumers based on which bars offer certain beer. Cafes and bars can play into this gap by advertising the consumptions they offer through the app. As such, they can may become more prominent in terms of suggestions as given to the users. Also, they can promote use of the app such that user identify the specific / bar café in terms of location details when they have been consuming a certain alcoholic beverage. At last, they can look for the most popular beers on the app and start offering these beers at their venues. As such, they may attract a larger segment of the app's userbase.

Micro breweries and big brewing companies are also part of the market, but again on the supply side. Because the app offers customized suggestions in terms of beers to user's , micro breweries as well as big breweries could use these suggestion feeds as a means to advertise to this target audience.

Question 4: List examples of needs that could be fulfilled for different market segments served by this app. Have a look at competing apps to come up with needs that may not be fulfilled by the app you chose.

Although this question has been partly answered in the last question, I will give a short summary

- Beer aficionados:
    - o Keep track of your beer history
    - o Keep track of those beers you liked and those you disliked
    - o Get suggestions based on your beer history
    - o Get suggestions on awesome bars and microbreweries to go visist
- Traveller and backpackers
    - o Same as the previous one accept for the fact that you will get heaps of great local suggestions such as to enrich your travel experience by going local in terms of beer
- Cafes and bars
    - o Customize advertising through the app on beer aficionados
    - o Customize their range of available beer based on the most-popular beer lists
- Micro breweries and big brewing companies
    - o Target the beer audience by means of advertising through the app

One of UNTAPPD competitors is the app Ratebeer. This app offers more options for the aficionados. For instance, a beer aficionado can rate beer on multiple criteria, such as taste, aroma, look etc. As such, it contains a more detailed database of beer ratings. It also provides its userbase with a calendar of beer related events. As such it offers its users a larger amount of timebound beer related activities than UNTAPPD

Question 5: Prepare and submit one discussion question about the chapters above. We will discuss some of these in class.

In chapter 7, the author talks about the psychology and philosophy of aesthetics. In particular, the author takes an evolutionary perspective on the matter at hand. He states that perceptions of aesthetics are mostly an implicit endeavour. Yet the author completely avoids the word emotion. In my opinion, aesthetics trigger emotions which in turn trigger attitudes or evaluations of objects / designs. These emotions consist of both valence and arousal. Other perspectives of emotions consist of cognitive appraisals, expressions and action tendencies. I think that such a perspective may provide a great extension of the theory as described by the author.