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Honoring God with App Development

The modern world of technology is both a blessing and a curse. Technology allows people to connect to others, access information, and be productive like never before, but that comes with the price of distractions and addiction to devices. Although many will take advantage of the situation by creating purposely-addictive algorithms, God calls Christians to be different. As Christians, we are to love others in all we do (NIV Bible, 1 Cor. 16.14), which includes app development. Luckily, there are ways to produce an engaging app that aligns with biblical principles without inciting distraction.

To understand how to keep an app's engagement without increasing distractions, we must first identify the conflict between the two. App notifications and interruptions may interfere with aspects of the user's life more than the developer initially expects. For example, many car accidents occur because drivers are preoccupied with their phones. As a result, companies like Apple are trying to stop this by developing new features to help drivers focus (Apple.com, 2022). However, that will only help so much, and app developers can take it a step further to aid the user's safety.

App developers have a large range of options to keep the user engaged without intruding on their focus. If an addictive game is interfering with the user's attention, the app could track

how many hours the user spends and limit aspects of the game accordingly. For example, if the app were a puzzle game, there could be a limit on the number of puzzles per day, and the number could vary from user to user. This way, the app would still allow users to enjoy the product while also placing healthy boundaries to ensure they take breaks. If an app was to send out a notification, it could prompt the user for the time of day they would like to receive it. However, if the user did not set a time, it could still find a safe time to send it. The app could check if it is a good time to send a notification by tracking when the user opens the app. Therefore, if the data shows the user frequently opening the app in the evening, it is safe to say that the user could handle a notification around that time. The inverse of this idea would also be beneficial. Instead of the user choosing when to be notified, the user could choose when not to be notified. Allowing block-out times for the user will aid their focus and productivity immensely. These only are a few features that keep the user interested in the app while also preventing disturbances.

Although some developers may put profit above the well-being of the user, God calls us to do the opposite. God calls us to be a light to others so that they will see how our actions will glorify God (NIV Bible, Matt. 5.16). As discussed earlier, there are a variety of features developers can implement that preserve enjoyment without dishonoring God or distracting the user unnecessarily. The various blocks and limitations will make room for the user to take a break and focus on the task in front of them. All that being said, there is still only so much a developer can do. It is still the user's responsibility to put their phone away in conversations or when driving. However, implementing some helpful features in the apps we develop is one way of loving others through all that we do.

Works Cited

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