Project Description (Protocol)

Study Title: evaluation of a location based web application for travel experiences sharing and travel planning

Researcher(s): Donglin Pu

Funder:
Sponsor (if known):

Background
A web application is developed in the past 5 months to enhance travel experiences. It is aimed at providing a better way to share travel experiences by displaying photos, statuses and check-ins on travel routes on a map. It also allows people to make their travel plan based on where their friends have been to instead of relying on existing generic travel guide.

Method
A location based web application is developed. It allows users to import photos, statuses and check-ins from Facebook and then routes will be automatically generated based on the location information of the photos, statuses and check-ins.

During the evaluation, questionnaires will be sent out to verify that sharing travel routes is a better way to share travel experience. A trial will be conducted where participants will use this application and existing travel guides to make their travel plan and to verify if their travel experiences can be enhanced.

Materials
The application can be accessed on http://routes.donglinpu.me. There are two questionnaires. The first one asks questions about how people share their travel experiences using current social networks. The second questionnaire requires participants to use the application and other existing applications and answer questions about their experiences of using these applications.

The questionnaires are hosted on Google Form.
Questionnaire about travel experience sharing:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13EQuWjsa8E_IK2ANUcFHLqawFrJypFJlKwzQR89R-6s/viewform
Trial:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1w_WATNgPNyMX8YWS6XIxVQ3ZMYezo9yu8JxtOYn6JH4/viewform

Participants
The participants will be mainly my friends from my course and from University of Southampton. The participants are also likely to be the friends of my friends, who may not be from University of Southampton. I expect at least 30 people to take part. This application is open to everyone who uses Facebook because the application requires photos, statuses and check-ins from Facebook.

Procedure
Questionnaire:
1. Participants will fill the first questionnaire which asks questions about how they share travel experiences on existing social networks and how they make their travel plans.
2. At the end of questionnaire one, participants will be asked if they want to take part in the trial to use the application.
3. Filling the first questionnaire will take 10 minutes.

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Trial:
1. If participants decide to participate in the trial, they will be asked to use this application to import photos, statuses and check-ins of their travelling.
2. The application will generate routes based on the location information of the photos, statuses and check-ins.
3. The routes information is saved into the database of the application so their friends can see them.
4. Then, participants will be asked to search for popular places using existing travel guides such as TripAdvisor and rate on how easy it is to achieve the task.
5. Participants will be asked to perform the same tasks using this application.
6. The use of the application and other application will take approximately 10 minutes.
7. Filling the questionnaire for the trial will take approximately 10 minutes.
8. Therefore, each trial will take approximately 20 minutes.

Statistical analysis

The percentage of people who consider sharing travel routes to be a better way of sharing travel experiences can be calculated.

The ratings of how easy it is to use existing travel guides and this application to make travel plan can be compared.

The percentage of people who consider their friends experience when making their travel plan can be calculated.

The percentage of people who think that using this application will enhance their travel experience can be calculated.

Ethical issues

This application uses existing data from Facebook. It only stores Facebook IDs and IDs of photos, statuses and check-ins of participants in the database. The actual names and photos of users are not stored in the database.

Data protection and anonymity

The application only requires photos, statuses and check-ins from the users. It does not require unnecessary information about the users and will not use their data for any other purpose.

The passwords to the responses of the questionnaires and the database of the application are secure. Only I have the access to the passwords and I will not disclose the passwords and data to any other people.

All responses to the questionnaires will be permanently deleted after the project is finished. The data stored in the database of the application will only be kept if the participants explicitly give permission to. This is reflected in the About Your Data section in the questionnaire of the trial.

I will comply with the terms and conditions of Google Drive and Google App Engine and data protection guidelines of the University of Southampton.

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