**MEMO**

TO: Anthony Scaduto

FROM: Jonathan Ward

DATE: March 24, 2015

SUBJECT: Usability Report on the MyFitnessPal Tutorial

Usability testing alludes to assessing an item or service by testing it with representative users. In this case I am the user and will be determining how useful Mr. Scaduto’s tutorial of the “MyFitnessPal” mobile application. My methods in testing the functionality of this tutorial are simple but should identify any problems an average user may come across. First, I plan to read the tutorial in its entirety without following any of the steps. Secondly, I will read through it and follow the steps outlined as they are given. Lastly, I will assess the overall usability of the tutorial and read through a final time focusing on grammar. I may very well end up reading the tutorial more than three times but the above is my general approach.

The tutorial titled “Creating and Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle: A MyFitnessPal Tutorial” is an introduction to the mobile version of the MyFitnessPal application. It is directed at anyone who would like to keep track of caloric intake and other health related goals. The tutorial is divided into a few sections: creating an account, choosing and entering in your fitness goals and tracking your first day of eating.

Over the course of a few weeks I have read over the tutorial multiple times. Overall, it is a simple and to the point tutorial for novice users. I thoroughly examined each task and found very few issues with any of the instructions. I observed many things that were done very well and that increase the simplicity of going through the tutorial. In this usability report I am going to go over any strengths or weaknesses that I came across. This report will evaluate the tutorial on content and organization/style. The conclusion to the report will summarize my finding. This report is organized and analyzed more specifically in the following way: evaluation of the introductory material, evaluation of the tasks, evaluation of the writing and evaluation of the use of genre. The report will end with an overall evaluation and some recommendations.

**Content**

*Evaluation of the Cover Page, Introduction, and Conclusion*

I am starting this usability report with an evaluation of the cover page, introduction, and conclusion. Although the evaluation of the conclusion chronologically belongs later in the report, I feel an introduction and conclusion are very similar and can be evaluated at the same time.

To start, the cover page is a strong feature of this tutorial. The font is of adequate size and contrasts with the paper well. The full title of the tutorial is “Creating and Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle: A MyFitnessPal Tutorial”. This is a good title because of the fact is very obvious in its goal of “Creating and Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle”. A weaker title for example would have simply been “A MyFitnessPal Tutorial”. The title also gives a good idea of the audience that it is directed toward. There are no errors in my opinion in the cover page of this tutorial and it functions well to convey the message it intends. Next, I will discuss the introduction.

In my evaluation of the introduction I found it to be sufficient. It discusses that the subject is the “MyFitnessPal” app and that it is geared toward people who need motivation to “… lose 10, 20 or even 50 pounds…”. I was easily able to decipher what kind of audience it was geared toward. The language used shows that the intended audiences are people who are interested in a healthier lifestyle but are beginners and do not necessarily know how to begin. It allows for a broad audience because of the simple tasks that are outlined and this is a positive aspect in my opinion. The tasks that are to come in the tutorial are clearly outlined and explained. The technical requirements to use this application are not very rigorous and are described bullet form which assists in ease of understanding. The introduction is sound and accomplishes the tasks it sets out to but in my opinion it can be lengthened. While it is sufficient the introduction could have been extended a little more. It is sufficient because it does discuss the subject, the intended audience, the purpose, the scope and the technical requirements. The important things were covered but seemed to have been covered in a “check box” type of way. All the items were mentioned quickly and pushed to the side without any expanding. While this may be technically correct, I personally feel that it should be lengthened some. Other than the length it was a good introduction that conveys exactly what it needs to without any fluff. I will evaluate the conclusion next.

The conclusion is simple and to the point. This is how a conclusion should be. The writer concludes the manual with the standard concluding strategy of summarizing the document. It goes over the main tasks and even ends with a call to action of sorts “…and I urge to never stop striving to be the best version of YOU that can possibly be.” This was a strong feature and helps create a sense of accomplishment. This conclusion was exceptionally well done but did have a few grammatical errors that can be seen in the quote above. I will go over grammar in a later section.

Overall, the cover page, introduction, and conclusion are well written. The cover page accurately conveys the information that is critical to the prospective tutorial reader; it is the perfect title in my eyes. The introduction covers all the important points but ideally would be a little longer. The conclusion is sound and I found no problems beside some minor grammatical errors. Next, I will move on to the evaluation of steps and tasks.

**Content**

*Evaluation of the Tasks*

In this part of the “MyFitnessPal” tutorial evaluation I will evaluate how well the tasks are presented as well as anything relating to the tasks.

From the time I spent reading and working through this tutorial I can safely say that the tasks are well laid out. The titles of each task are clearly labeled and describe the coming points fully. Each step/task is numbered correctly and each one flows well into the next. Some of the numbered tasks have bulleted sub-points that give the user more information. The instructions are complete and do step-by-step go through the process of each task the tutorial sets out to cover. I was easily able to go through each task and figure out what was going on. The descriptions are good and allow for easy completion. The images that are labeled (some are not labeled, this is covered later) are well done in this tutorial. Most images are correctly labeled as Figure 1, Figure 2 etc. Whenever a figure is referenced, a signal phrase such as “See Figure 1” is used. Nothing fancy or over the top but that is a positive feature in my opinion.

If I had to add some recommendation for some improvement, I would say to add points in the sub-points that direct users to a different task without having to read the entirety of the tutorial. This is not a big problem because the tutorial is relatively short and it is not a huge burden find a topic of interest. In a longer tutorial it would be helpful to have a point that may ask “If you want to learn about this feature go to page 15”. Although, this is not necessarily a major problem it could be a good habit form to increase ease of use.

Another thing that would help improve the tutorial would be to remove some of the sub-points and put them back in, to the side, as a “Please Note:” or “Warning”. I assumed that bulleted sub-points below the steps would be actions that I needed to perform but all the sub-points vary from hints, side notes, to actions.

Also, another suggestion would be to label the sub-points with things such as 7a, 7b, 7c etc. For example, to help with the suggestion in the paragraph above this, it would be useful to have actions that the user needs to perform labeled as 7a, 7b, 7c etc. But the side notes could stay as bullet points. This would help in differentiating a simple statement from an action the user needs to perform.

Another thing to note is that all the figures do not have labels and all of them do not have titles or descriptions below the image. A simple description or title after the figure label would increase usability and clear up any confusion. For example “Figure 1: Screenshot of the Sign up Page of MyFitnessPal” would help to improve the visuals.

In conclusion to this section, the tasks are simple and flow very well into one another. The overall feeling is positive. Each step and/or decision point is clear and I was able to complete all the tasks without any trouble or confusion. Some small problems relating the figures were present in the tutorial but can be fixed without much effort. Some of the images had figure labels and some did not. Also, I would recommend a title or figure description to go along with the figure labels.

**Content**

*Evaluation of the Writing*

In this section of the report I will go over any grammatical errors I found as well as comment on sentence structure. I need to make note of the fact that I am not strong in grammatical evaluations but I was able to find a few errors. I will go over specific grammar mistakes first.

In the final paragraph of page 1 there is a typo of “tthat” that should be written as “that”. This is a minor flaw and can be attributed to many things of which the writer of the tutorial should be last.

On page 9, step 7, of the tutorial I found an error that seems to be an “eggcorn”. An “eggcorn”, according to WIKIPEDIA is an idiosyncratic substitution of a word or phrase for a word or words that sound similar or identical in the speaker's dialect (sometimes called oronyms). The new phrase introduces a meaning that is different from the original, but plausible in the same context, such as "old-timers' disease" for "Alzheimer's disease". The sentence says “For all intensive purposes, the account being created while developing this tutorial is from the United States…” and I believe the phrase should be “intents and purposes”.

In the final sentence of the conclusion on page 14 I found two errors in the form of omitted words. The sentence says “I hope you truly enjoyed my tutorial, and I urge to never stop striving to be the best version of YOU that can possible be.” I would change that by adding two more uses of the word “you”. It would change to “I hope you truly enjoyed my tutorial, and I urge [you] to never stop striving to be the best version of YOU that [you] can possible be.”

One final grammar based error that I found appeared in the works cited page. The list of sources needs to be alphabetized.

Again, I must restate that editing papers based on grammar is not my strongest attribute but I believe these suggestions will help to improve this tutorial. Next I will talk about sentence structure and the cohesiveness of the tutorial as a whole.

After going through this tutorial multiple times it is clear that the sentence structure is, for the most part, well done. I could not identify any sentence fragments or errors in sentence clauses. Subject-verb agreement seemed to be correct as well. I read the tutorial in my head multiple times and read it aloud once. Neither of the reading methods led me to believe there were any major sentence structure problems. I am sure there are commas where they do not need to be and commas missing where the need to be but I am not qualified to comment on that area sentence structure.

Also, I did notice the steps began, for the most part, in the imperative verb form. The imperative style is when a verb makes a command or request. This form is very appropriate for writing a tutorial and therefore something that is done well. While, not necessarily an error, I would like to suggest an improvement in the next paragraph.

Going through the tutorial I noticed a few words that I did not know the definition to. I checked the definitions section of the tutorial and could not find them listed. The word “Macronutrient” was not there and I feel it would be helpful to other readers that are not biologically inclined. Also, I would recommend adding the word “hypertrophy”. Other than for these two words, the tutorial was an easy read and the definition page was a welcome and helpful addition. I would like to go over one last topic in the evaluation of writing section, the cohesiveness and feel of the tutorial.

One of the strongest attributes of this tutorial is how well it flows from task to task and the friendly tone of the language throughout. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a daunting task and can be intimidating, especially if a user is looking to lose weight. The language that is used in this tutorial is very friendly and motivating. I consider that to be a major driving force in anyone completing the tutorial or even continuing to read it. Mr. Scaudto mentions that he enjoys motivating people and expresses a lot of interest in helping people; this attitude comes out through his writing on this topic. I was impressed with this aspect.

In conclusion, to this section, there are a few mistakes that I found when evaluating the writing, just like any other piece of writing would have. The punctuation was fine and I found very few grammatical errors or typos. The structure of sentences seemed appropriate and I did not discover any subject-verb agreement or sentence clause errors. Also there were no sentence fragments that I was able to discover. This was well written and used a positive, motivating language which made the examination much easier. This is a clever technique to implement when covering a topic where some people could be overwhelmed or intimidated. This was the most positive aspect of the tutorial in my opinion.

**Organization/Style**

*Evaluation of the Use of Genre*

This section will cover my evaluation of genre conventions and formatting. Also, I will touch on pagination and the table of contents. Tutorials are set up in a very specific way and this tutorial is a good example of how to create one correctly.

Tasks are clearly written at the top of the pages in bold and steps are numbered. Things that should be bolded are in bold and stand out appropriately. Each task flows into the next one and follows the simple formatting of a tutorial style piece of writing. All of the headings are concise but descriptive enough to be useful. In my opinion the conventions of the tutorial writing genre are followed appropriately.

The table of contents is conventionally correct and in the right location. The page numbers match their labeled locations and it functions appropriately as a table of contents should.

The only improvement I can suggest is to add more sub-section headings and to include those sub-sections in the table of contents. It is not extremely important but would fill out a page that is otherwise fairly bare for a table of contents.

Overall, this tutorial matches the conventions of tutorial writing. It has proper format, headings, pagination and a functional table of contents. The only recommendation I can make is to increase the table of contents size. This could be done by labeling subsections and adding those sections to the table.

**Conclusion**

*Overall Evaluation and Recommendations*

My usability report was structured to evaluate six different aspects of this tutorial. The introduction of the report describes my methods and purpose. I continue to evaluate the introduction of the manual, the tasks, the writing itself and the use of genre.

This tutorial was well written and gets to points quickly. It describes them accurately and accomplishes its goal of getting users interested in fitness/calorie tracking. There was nothing that limited my progress through the tutorial. The way each step ordered or requested the reader to move complete a certain task was well done and sufficiently worded. The topic of this tutorial was simple, yet a difficult one to get all people interested in. The type of language that was used was positive, motivating and friendly. It is definitely a major factor in the ease of completion of this tutorial. It was stylistically easy to read and flowed well from page to page.

Some recommendations for future revisions are described in more detail previously but some of the highlights would be a lengthened introduction, removal of “side notes” from the step sub-points, adding figure labels to all images/adding figure titles or descriptions, and simple grammar corrections.

In conclusion, the tutorial was extremely sufficient in instructing novice users. It was a success despite the small problems I found. I hope the problems identified in this usability report are taken into consideration and assist in creating an even better “MyFitnessPal” tutorial.