COVID-19 Impact Statement

The recent spread of the COVID-19 virus has resulted in a number of changes that had to be implemented in perhaps the most important phases of the project. A lot of these issues have been mentioned throughout the main report, however, this document aims to give the most complete overview of the challenges.

The most notable change is in the user-testing of the application. The created software was intended to give a walking tour around campus. The restriction on public movement made that inadvisable, as it would result in a larger risk of contracting the virus for both the participants and the researcher. Instead, the tour was done indoors by mocking the testing device’s GPS coordinates. There were obvious issues with the setup, as participants did not have enough space to explore some of the interactions. There were also other issues with inadequate lighting conditions and surface detection due to the proximity of walls. A lot of the AR interactions, such as the photo spheres and some of the pedestals, were created with the idea that users would be able to compare the real-world scenery to the virtual objects. This was obviously not possible and resulted in a lot of negative comments from all participants, wishing that they could be in the real location. The final demonstration was also affected, as it now has to be a video tour, which does not completely capture the intention of the application.

The sample size for the evaluation was also heavily impacted due to the lockdown. Only 3 people were selected, all of which already lived in the same flat as the writer. The small number of participants not only restricted the final conclusions, but also has a high chance of introducing some bias in the results. All of the users were closely related to the researcher as well as to each other, meaning that they exchanged experiences between trials and perhaps “softened the blow” when providing criticism.

The access to resources was another problem that was encountered. The most obvious example is the lack of quiet lab space, which is usually available in the Queen Mother Building. The student usually takes advantage of the available monitors and connects one as a second screen to their laptop. That, coupled with the distractions at home, significantly slowed down progress.

Although the student did experience some of the symptoms of COVID-19, this did not have a major impact on his work. Thankfully, all signs of the illness disappeared within a couple of days, which meant that work could continue as normal. There were no other notable issues stemming from the lockdown.