

COMP2213 - Interaction Design
Deliverable 5

Individual Reflective journal

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Design Jam Exercise 1

The design Jam exercise 1 proposes the challenge of thinking about consent during the design process as people do not trust digital services due to a lack of transparency and control. This exercise is strictly related to interaction design as it highlights that users' needs for transparency and control are neglected in current design solutions, creating a gap in the user-centred design process.

The most attention-grabbing scenario in task 2 is the Cookie Notice as most (if not all) websites merely assume that a user browsing the contents of the site explicitly gives consent to the use of cookies, bypassing the GDPR requirements. Such an assumption would be correct if a user were to be informed about the Cookie Privacy Policy in advance, but this does not occur in practice.

Task 3 demonstrates that even though the sign-up phase should be the most transparent one for the users, current digital services deeply lack transparency during it as they enable fast sign-ups so that to increase their user base.

This exercise is relevant to the interaction design process also because it highlights that when developing design solutions, designers should also take into account compliance with laws and regulations. Indeed, the template in task 1 is not compliant with the following GDPR requirements: (1) Consent must be freely given, (2) Consent must be informed, (3) Consent must be unambiguous and (4) Consent can be revoked.

In conclusion, it seems that current designs do not take users' needs for transparency and control into account and try to cleverly bypass regulations. In the future, I will include in the evaluation step of the user-centred design process the assessment of the level of transparency and control from the user's point of view as I believe it is the key factor for satisfying these users' needs which are also human rights. I think that interaction design must comply with regulations and its capabilities go further beyond this as it can provide users with an abundance of interactive tools to manage their data.

Design Jam Exercise 2

The design jam exercise 2 is based on the concept of "Personas" which are fictional characters created by interaction designers so that to represent the different categories of users that may use a given digital service. Specifically, this exercise requires to analyse three different "Personas" so that to come up with a solution which helps them protect their personal data.

"Personas" are an invaluable tool in interaction design, especially in the user-centred design process as they have let me put myself into fictional users' shoes, establishing a sort of empathic relation. This has significantly assisted me in the understanding of their needs and expectations. As an example, I have asked myself what would Paul do if he was about to read a newspaper during his rest break at work and a personal data protection manager warned him about the risks being run. Consequently, this sort of role-playing game has suggested me that such a personal-data protection manager application must avoid "breakdown" as much as possible because if I were Paul, I would not like to be disturbed in that circumstance.

I believe that "Personas" give their best when designing assistive technologies as it is of paramount importance to establish an empathic relation with people that have physical impairments so that to develop solutions that make a difference in their disadvantaged lives. Therefore, through the use of "Personas", it is possible to develop truly accessible designs as the concept of the average user disappears, given that designers develop customisable design solutions that satisfy users that have the same needs but different expertise, strength and resources.

In conclusion, I can state that thanks to this exercise I have learnt about "Personas" and I like to think them as a 360° user-needs eliciting tool as they assist in eliciting users' needs, experiences and goals through the added human touch. In the future, I will definitely use "Personas" due to the advantages that they provide in the user-centred design process. Furthermore, this exercise contributes to the coursework project too. Consequently, my group and I will deploy "Personas" after the data gathering and analysis phase so that to come up with several accessible customisable interactive solutions which are firmly grounded on the satisfaction of user needs.

Design Jam Exercise 4

The design jam exercise 4 consists of exploiting Trust, Transparency and Control as a competitive advantage for one of the startups included in the startup.zip file.

My group and I have carried this exercise out by following the two phases (Divergent and Convergent thinking) involved in the ideas generation process. However, we have not limited ourselves to the specific challenge of the startup as we have tried to find a universal solution that makes it possible to achieve Trust, Transparency and Control in the broad context of interaction design. At the end of the process, we have come up with five different solutions and have selected the best one.

The problem statement in DX3 outlines that people are currently frightened to share their personal data due to a lack of transparency. So it is of paramount importance to empower users in order to make them trust digital services' handling of personal data.

This exercise gives us the opportunity, through a startup scenario, to provide practical solutions to our problem statement and consequently to enhance current user experience. Given that the final aim of interaction design is to improve the user experience to the fullest extent, then this exercise is strictly related to the interaction design process. The reasons why improving the user experience is at the core of interaction design revolves to the fact that not only is it beneficial to the users, but it also represents a competitive advantage in the current economy-based society.

The insights that we have gained through this exercise are valuable for future projects. Indeed, we have come up with a series of ideas that through the Trust, Transparency and Control concept could enhance the user experience, and we are willing to implement and evaluate them in the prototype and evaluation phase of the coursework. These design ideas are firmly grounded on the following points: (1) Users must be empowered by having full real-time control and access to their personal data, (2) Users must be acknowledged about how their personal data is effectively used and (3) The interactive designs allowing point 1 and 2 must be easy, pleasant to use, efficient and well-integrated in the current designs. Above all, they must limit the users' distraction from their focused tasks (breakdown).

Design Jam Exercise 5

This week's Design Exercise is focused on sketching ideas and making use of prototyping tools to see how abstract solutions can be implemented into a chosen app. The aim is not to design the whole app, but just the parts that are important in tackling a specific design problem.

In Design Exercise 4, we have applied the creative thinking techniques of Divergent Thinking and Convergent Thinking to identify the design limits of a startup and come up with the most promising solutions. But once ideas have been identified, it is time to bring them to life and investigate users' reception to their associated concrete designs. This phase is known as prototyping. Thus, prototyping is a quick and effective way of bringing customers' ideas to life as a sample of users can be exploited to evaluate design solutions so that to make constant improvements during the iterative interaction design process.

The advantages of prototyping are that the designers can: (1) Have a solid foundation from which to ideate towards improvements, (2) Apply changes early, (3) Show the prototype to users so they can give their feedback to help pinpoint which elements/variants work best and which not, (4) Have a tool to experiment with associated parts of the users' needs and problems, (5) Provide a sense of ownership to all concerned stakeholders and (6) Improve time-to-market by minimizing the number of errors to correct before product release.

Prototyping methods are classified under one of the following broad categories: low-fi or high-fi. While in the former, low fidelity prototypes are produced, in the latter, prototypes, which are closer to the final product in terms of look, feel, and means of interaction, are crafted. Even though high-fi prototypes can help the design team gain valuable insights into the final product's reception, their production is time-consuming, and it can potentially delay the project release in case of sudden changes. In contrast, low-fi prototypes are suitable for an agile environment but provide less information about the final product's acceptance. Thus, both of these testing methods have downsides which designers must take into account, especially in the presence of time and budget constraints. Based on the latter point, my group and I will use low-fi prototypes for the later stages of the coursework given the presence of both time and budget constraints.