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Procedural Programming

27 September 2017

Morality in Technology: There's an app for that

Western society is obsessed with its technology, news, and staying up to date. Mobile devices are powerful information systems in the palms of one's hand, taking much of one's time, even on the daily commute. Something that requires constant attention and awareness should never compete with such a device, as one's life and the lives of others are at risk. It is satisfying to constantly receive new information, but it is problematic.

App designers and developers must take it upon themselves to determine how distracting or how involved a product is with the consumer. For example, Apple attempted to prevent distracted driving with the "Do Not Disturb While Driving Feature" in iOS 11(Clover). The feature halted notifications or general engagement with the driver's device while it detected the car in motion(Clover). This concern for the end user may stem from a perceived sense of moral responsibility of the product, as suggested by Michael Loui and Keith Miller(Loui/Miller). Apple created the device and operating system that displays alerts and notifications, hence responsible for any issues as a result of the way those alerts and notifications are displayed. This could be justified in the normalization of distracted driving and its grave consequences. In 2015, 3,477 people died as a result of distracted driving, according to the NHTSA(Currin).

It is the burden of developers and app designers to find a balance between engagement and distraction. However, according to Luke 6:31, the creator of such apps must be comfortable using such a feature as well, if they will hold their users to such a standard.

An app designer could limit distraction using schedules. Such a design would include categories, such as sleep, work, and study. The user defines the schedule, such as what time they plan to sleep. During that span of time, the device would not show notifications or alerts, except for an optional alarm to wake the user up. Another schedule could be for school, where specific classes could be defined to their exact time, as opposed to a span. The device would not show alerts or notifications and would limit access to basic functions and outline what apps(social media such as Snapchat and Facebook) are inaccessible in a faded color effect. Then, a default feature(toggleable) exclusive from schedules, would prevent notifications or alerts while the user is speaking and/or is being spoken to, and force the user to double tap anything if one is moving above 10 mph. The feature would determine if a conversation occurs with a sample of the user's voice previously acquired in setup and use voice recognition to determine cues; the motion aspect would employ use of an accelerometer. 1 Peter 4:9 asks that we be kind and hospitable to one another without complaint, as the people in one's life deserve one's time and attention without interruption.

Ultimately, developers must hand the burden of responsibility to the end user. 1 Corinthians 10:24 commands one to think of the greater good. Ideally, that would be to ensure safety and respect in technology. However, God gives humanity the gift of free will, despite its failure and flaws. The greatest good would be to provide the means to righteousness and encourage it, while understanding that responsibility to 'Settings' is always the user's.

Works Cited

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