Phase 1: User Investigation and the Persona

Investigation Process:

Within the project, our group had the task of choosing a target persona from the following categories outlined in the assignment brief: Casual users, Future Programmers or Future Managers. In order to decide which option was ideal for us, we decided gathering data from those around us, through a survey, would present the most sensible choice of target demographic. Our aim was to utilise the questions in the survey to identify which target-user option was most accessible to us, hence providing a definitive answer to which we should base the persona off.

Through the results of the survey, consisting of 7 participants, it was observed that most participants did not have as much experience in programming or management as we were expecting. As a result, this caused the selection of our target demographic to be the "casual user" as it would be significantly more difficult to source target users if we were to choose from the other options. Knowing this "umbrella" term is too broad to sufficiently implement optimum usability features, we aimed to further utilise the participants' answers to determine a more specific brand of 'general user'. These questions* consisted of additionally helpful information including the participant's background, interest in programming and the interfaces and websites that they enjoyed using.

We noticed that most of the participants were within an age range between mid-teens and mid-twenties, were mostly either students or employed. Additionally, almost all of the surveyees stated that they mainly used the internet as their main source of information, using it as a resource for social interactions, education and entertainment.

When questioned about the interfaces that the participants used and enjoyed, they mostly included social media websites, such as Facebook, email, educational sites, such as Canvas, and Google. The majority of participants accessed these websites via PC or through their mobile phone.

Moreover, when asked for opinions on what makes a "good" or a "bad" interface, the participants included a wide range of characteristics. Some shared positive aspects of interfaces that included complementary colour schemes, clear text, easy navigation and dropboxes. Contrastingly, the negative elements comprised of slow, unresponsive interfaces with small text, overcomplicated features and difficult navigation.

Although the survey acted as a high grade source of research that allowed us to gather specific information on 'casual users', we also utilised low grade information through the internet to gain

*See Appendix A

insight into the behaviors of users that exceeded beyond the boundaries of our survey. As the majority of the participants fell into the age range of 18-25 and were students, we researched how many young adults use websites as a learning tool. The Oxford University published an article* in 2017 that revealed that 84% of the individuals aged between 18 and 24 used the internet to find out information about current affairs, while the National Broadband Network in Australia in their 2017 report stated that 75% of Australian Student use the internet as a learning tool*. This trend also seems to apply to older students in university, as a survey published on the website ProQuest* revealed that most of the second year university students had "...academic motivations…" in using the internet, "...namely assignments (92.25%), knowledge (87.07%) and information (81.02%)...". With the results of our research solidifying the findings within our survey, our many sources of information supported that our demographic consult websites to help them to complete tasks and gather information.

In the conclusion of our research, the data we have obtained has lead us to believe that our specific brand of 'general user' would be a persona within the age range of 18-25 with little experience in programming and heavily uses the internet as a source of information. Additionally, our persona enjoys simple and easy interfaces with clear text, easy navigation and a harmonious colour scheme. Moreover, the main goal of our persona is to find their desired information quickly and efficiently, and to be able to access the website's wide range of resources.

*See Appendix B

Target Persona:

Name: John

Age: 18 – 25

Background: Student, Little Experience with programming

Where They Go for Information:

- Heavy user of the internet.
- Usually uses a combination of a mobile phone and a PC to find information.
- Websites include Google, YouTube, Facebook

Motivations:

- John only has a very simple understanding of coding and programming and would like to use the website to expand their skills.
- Is searching for helpful resources that will help him study and finish his homework tasks.

Needs:

- An interface that is fast and responsive.
- Clear font with logically organised information and heading.
- An interface that can be easily navigated.
- A harmonious colour scheme that isn't distracting or loud.

Goals:

- To improve and expand upon their programming skills.
- To find the information he needs with ease.

Appendix B:

In order of appearance -

Nielsen, R. (2017). Where Do People Get Their News? *Oxford University.*
https://medium.com/oxford-university/where-do-people-get-their-news-8e850a0dea03

Evolve. (2017). NBN Digital Parenting Report 2017. *National Broadband Network*.
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Geyer, S; Hall, H; le Roux, M P; Crafford, G. (2017). Internet use among university students: A reason for concern? *ProQuest.*
https://search.proquest.com/docview/2067963452?pq-origsite=gscholar