

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

-Hippocrates

Research and design solutions into health and wellness is a passion of mine. When I was younger, I had to stay at hospitals often for childhood asthma. It was interesting to me that Canadian hospitals offered some of the best care in the world, however, gave unhealthily and often unedible meal options as food. UX designers are meant to humanize the digital experience and I wanted to explore these themes using a digital product.

The basic problem statement explores that consumers are not given proper information about how food and nutritional supplementation can affect their genetic genome creating pain points in their health and wellness. Furthermore, recent developments in science and technology are not being utilized to help people live longer and healthier lives by altering their diet to incorporate their genetic markers (23 and Me.)

My design approach is iterative in nature using Interaction Design (IxD) and design thinking methodologies to create an optimized digital application. I started with an ethnographic research study composed of SME interviews, questionnaires and academic research papers. Research is essential to find the right scope of your project and often opens up areas of further interest. From the research phase, I was able to create dynamic personas which helped build content scenarios followed by a working prototype.

At this stage I would have considered a user study however I wanted to also work on branding this application since it is a portfolio piece. However, I do understand branding the application before a user study and further design iterations is problematic and not in the spirit of the design thinking process.

The prototype was created from the foundations of the research study, persona and context scenarios. If an application can track health markers, it would open up countless ways to improve the lives of people by recommending foodstuffs in which their body specifically needs throughout the day. The application would be able to track specific markers (blood, saliva and/or neurochemical signals) and recommend foodstuffs that will help them acquire optimal wellness.

This project is a passion project of mine, however, the technology does not exist currently to create such an application. However, as a child who grew up with Star Trek, I have found the best ideas often come from science fiction where limitations do not exist. Ultimately, is that not what UX design is all about?