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User-Centered Design and Development | CSSCI 5839

Proposal - Misc Cube - short for Mischievous

Elevator Pitch:

Having animals as pets, we adopt not only one of the planet's most valuable creatures but also a lot of risky responsibilities. Every single animal, just like humans, have unique personalities or training levels and sometimes their mischievous behavior lead them having serious health issues by experiencing dangerous objects getting stuck inside their little bodies, needing serious surgeries to save their lives. Therefore, creating a mini ergonometric attachable Misc cube is very crucial for safety of animals, as well as parents' peace of mind.

Growing up, my family or families around me were not so pet friendly. Therefore, currently me and my siblings adopted not only few cats, but also 2 doggies that makes our lives complete, since moving to US. It has quickly become a norm for us to chase our pets around when they get mischievous and try to eat objects close by. Unfortunately, in one instance our husky boy, Jon, ate a piece of dog toy and suffered severely by intestine blockage, which lead him needing a serious and expensive surgery. And even more sadly, he still hasn't learned any lessons from his past behavior and keeps consuming random objects within seconds and in a very stealthy manner.

Creating a compact device such as Misc, that could track potential risks, including eating something dangerous could save a lot of living lives and doctor visits. Adding noise as well as vibration commands through a phone or a watch could be a safe and efficient way of disciplining pets. Additionally, having few extra features such as a camera and noise detection by barking for danger could allow parents track their pets in a more personal and up close level.

Target User Group:

For Misc cube, the target user group would be both the pets and the parents of these lovable creatures. Especially, pets that tend to be active, playful and mischievous in nature. Since, the device would be installed and used by human users, it is also crucial to communicate with people who have pets in their family. During, pandemic pet adoption levels increased a lot and therefore, I noticed a lot of people surrounding me also became pet parents as well. Sourcing data from them could help and come up with more detailed or tailored safety features for our pets at home.

Versions:

For this device, I would like to focus on having two approaches by either making it a wearable or a scanner in a designated location away from the pet. Meaning, Misc could either be an attachment to a collar or a stand alone device with visual sensors to track the animals' chewing behavior. Since, it is a challenging concept and might not be as successful either worn or placed in a distance, I would like to focus on achieving a goal by iteration as such.

How this project meets the theme:

By designing this device, it would help create a data for potential pet owners to eliminate problems such as adopting animal breeds with mischievous tendencies. It could also allow the users to get more familiar with their pet behavior and frequency of their actions. Most importantly, safety is a focal point of the project, therefore, users could regulate the danger risks around their pet children and create a safer environment.

3 interaction design challenges:

Most challenging part of this device is the actual design and placement of the product. Since, chewing a hazard is such a complex action to detect, creating a safety device with correct placement on the body is very crucial. Further, creating a sensor that is also functional for this issue is a great challenge to tackle.

Another, challenge that creates a potential problem is the usability by not only just one type of animal but more shapes and sizes. Even though, Misc could work the best for dogs due to their shapes and characteristics, but what about cats or ferrets? Would it be necessary to make this device all pets friendly or focus on just one breed?

And lastly, the actual safety commands are also something very important to eliminate a potential risk by disciplining a pet, instead of hurting them more. Therefore, coming up with effective and pain free shocking values to this device is important and very challenging. Even, designing new distraction solutions might be necessary to further create a safety control for the playful fur babies.