IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

With any proposed return to campus for teaching and face-to-face activities in both semester not coming to pass, we recognise there may have been an impact on the project; particularly in the 2nd semester. While the disruption affected both semesters, the form below focusses in the main with impact on semester 2 as projects may have anticipated a partial return to campus in semester 2 and this was reflected in plans and contents of the interim report.

This section is to formally record this impact. Please use the space below to outline the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (in semester 2) on your project. Please provide details on:

- The impact the absence of face-to-face activities had on completion of the project (e.g. ability to source materials, ability to carry out lab work, ability to build and test, etc.).
- The steps you undertook to mitigate these technical risks to your project deliverables (e.g. modelling, theory, virtual prototyping versus physical).
- The impacts on regular project management activities (meeting with supervisor, absence due to self-isolation: staff and students) and mitigation strategies.

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summarise the MATERIAL impact that the absence of face-to-face teaching in the University in semester 2 had on the plans and progress in your project.	

I believe this project was significantly affected due to the regulations in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic for the following reasons:

- I did not have access into university lab space when it came to soldering joints onto the motors. This meant I had to borrow equipment in order to make progress with the project. This meant using older, potentially less reliable equipment than would have been provided in the lab. It also meant gluing wires down to secure them to the Raspberry Pi instead of soldering that part as the tip of the soldering iron I was able to gain use of was too big to accurately solder onto this part of the robot.
- Lack of access to university equipment also prevented me from being able to design a structure to be printed on a 3D printer for the robot. This meant I had to come up with a DIY solution that could be made it home, less optimal and potentially less durable than one that could have been made in uni.
- The lack of face-to-face meetings made displaying current progress more difficult as everything had to be through the webcam of my laptop. Being able to physically being the project into university to have face-to-face meetings would have made it clearer what was happening with the project, and made it easier for my supervisor to provide guidance if and when needed.
- I experienced hardware faults during the project, firstly with the original SD Card I was using becoming corrupt and unusable, and then with the Raspberry Pi not powering on towards the end of the project. Both of these delays became significant due to Covid-19, as shops were not open, and the postage service was at times very slow, therefore it took a lot longer to get up and running again after a hardware fault than it would have normally, taking away time from the project.
- It was not possible to physically test the project for its intended purpose by having a cat interact with it. This is due to me not having one (which is something that should not affect the project), and Covid restrictions making it impossible to meet with others that are cat owners for their cats to interact with the project. Not being able to test the project in this way means that thorough evaluation was difficult.
- While not having Covid myself, I did have to self-isolate for 2 weeks after a flatmate in shared student accommodation caught the virus. The effects of isolation during this period and during the pandemic in general did have a slight effect on my mental health as I found it more difficult to focus on university work including this project, than I ever have at any point during school or university previously.