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9/6/2024

Professor Morsy

Milestone: Mobile App Research

I have chosen to move forward with developing a healthy food logging application because it lines up with current trends of well-being and health-conscious lifestyles. There has been an increased focus on nutrition, with many people seeking out tools to help them make more informed choices when it comes to food. The app will provide a convenient and efficient all-in-one solution, allowing users to make healthier decisions with minimal effort.

The app's main purpose is to empower health-conscious consumers to make informed choices while shopping for food. Users will be able to scan the barcode on food products, and the app will instantly display a graphic categorizing the ingredients based on their impact on our health. The graphic will use a simple color-coded system: red (unhealthy), yellow (neutral), and green (healthy). The intention being to simplify the decision-making process for people who choose healthier foods for themselves and their families.

App Description

The app will allow users to:

- Scan barcodes of food products to quickly and easily log information via their smartphone
 - Allow the ability to manually enter in products

- Display a graphic containing information regarding ingredients, assigning them a color of red, yellow, or green for rapid understanding
- Provide useful feedback to the user based on a food item's nutritional content, allowing for the well-informed decision
- Set fitness goals and user information such as weight, height, age, and caloric maintenance.

Priorities

The priority of the app will be to promote and enable healthier eating by offering an intuitive system to help log and assess foods in real time. The design will emphasize ease of use, clarity, and efficiency. It will appeal to a wide range of health-conscious individuals, from busy parents making spur of the moment decisions to fitness junkies resolute on maintaining their caloric intake. The app is designed to remove the guesswork involved in determining if certain foods align with the user's health goals, contributing to better dietary habits and improved well-being.

Usability and User Experience

The two apps I found that share similarities with my healthy food application are MyFitnessPal and Cronometer. Both apps seem to cater primarily to young adults, older adults, and possibly some elderly users who are interested in tracking their dietary intake and overall

health. These apps seem designed for health-conscious individuals looking to maintain or improve their fitness by monitoring their food consumption and physical activity.

- **Age Groups:** MyFitnessPal and Cronometer target a wide range of users, from young adults to middle-aged users, and some elderly individuals who are proactive about their health. The interface of both apps may be more challenging for elderly or less tech-savvy users to navigate, but they provide multiple tools for those committed to tracking their nutritional and fitness goals.
- **Cultural Consideration:** Both apps offer support to users from various countries through the ability to switch between the imperial and metric systems. This shows a more global approach, allowing users from different places to track their nutrition using familiar measurement systems. However, certain differences in food formulation, like the use of high fructose corn syrup in U.S. soft drinks versus cane sugar in other parts of the world, mean users may have to manually enter specific product data depending on their location.

Both MyFitnessPal and Cronometer were designed to track food consumption and fitness goals. They help users log meals, purchased foods, track micro/macronutrients, calories, and monitor exercise data. Both apps encourage social engagement by enabling users to connect with friends and share their progress, offering detailed nutrient tracking, which can appeal to users with more specific dietary needs, like athletes or those with medical restrictions.

- MyFitnessPal is relatively easy to use once users are familiar with it. Its barcode scanning feature seems to be available to free-tier users outside of the U.S but seems to be a paid feature within. It allows users to quickly log commonly purchased and eaten foods by saving them or selecting items from a larger user-generated database.

- Cronometer offers comprehensive nutrient tracking but restricts its barcode scanning feature to premium users. This limits its efficiency for free users who would prefer to scan products quickly instead of manually entering them. Both apps link to Apple Health and Android Health for syncing workout and activity data, consolidating users' health management into one place.

However, both apps can be information-heavy, which may overwhelm new/casual users or those unfamiliar with tracking detailed nutrition data.

- Both apps have a learning curve at first. While they become easier to use over time, their detailed interfaces may discourage new users from continuing after initial use. The numerous features and nutritional data tracking require significant time investments to become streamlined. MyFitnessPal's intuitive interface might be considered more user-friendly, particularly for those new to health apps. From a usability standpoint, both apps prioritize safety by ensuring personal data such as weight, activity, and nutrition are stored securely. While maybe not emotionally engaging, they promote social engagement by offering ways to connect with others and share logs or progress.
- Productivity is encouraged through customizable calorie and macronutrient goals, allowing users to set specific targets based on their fitness or weight loss objectives. This can be motivating for users looking to achieve health milestones almost like a game. As they track trends over time, the apps encourage users to return consistently and continue adjusting their goals.

Resources

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