Progress Report For Recipes For Life

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The following report outlines my progress so far in my honours project. The project is Recipes For Life – A cooking application for android devices which focusses on creating a collaborative cooking environment by enabling multiple people to collaborate on recipes. The core feature will be the collaborative tool allowing multiple people to create a community cookbook where they can add recipes to the cookbook and make alterations for example as you would with a traditional family cookbook where over the years notes are added to the side of the recipe. The motivation came from the recognition that there was no apps in the app store where you could create cookbooks where multiple people could add or edit recipes. I felt as we move more and more into a digital age the benefits of collaborative cookbooks could be lost which is why I feel it is necessary to create application that enables families, friends, colleagues, clubs and people online who have similar interests to be able to collaborate. Intended users ? Literature list ?

Semester one was focussed on exploring this idea to see if it was feasible and designing the application. The first month or so of the semester was drawing out sketches of how I envisioned the application, brainstorming features for the application as well as the need for collaborative cookbooks, researching current cooking apps and reading papers that focussed on the benefits of collaborative cookbooks. From this I found there was a lot of scope for the application because none of the apps featured the collaborative aspect but also a lot could be added to the app that is popular in other recipes apps such as timers for cooking and shopping lists created based on recipes you own. The papers I read strengthened my motivation for my application where they stated from autobiographical and historical perspectives that the cookbooks were a way to share experiences with others, form relationships and maintain tradition over years.

From this point I focussed on design decisions. I created more detailed design sketches using Axure which were then used later with 6 participants to receive some feedback on. I made database decisions such as I will use a server side SQL database which will send data to the app using JSON and php as well as a sqlite database in the phone which will send data to the server using JSON. I created a database design, class diagram and basic test strategy in preparation for implementation. Iterative design process ? Gantt chart ? Risk assessment ?

In October of semester 1 I focussed on my ethics application which was accepted in the middle of November. The ethics application outlined my plans to have a focus group where I could gain opinions on my design sketches for my application before implementation, a survey to gain peoples opinion on the application, the requirements important to them and cooking tech they are currently use, user testing sessions and an evaluation comparing application against one that’s currently on the market. So far I have had a focus group with 6 participants about my design sketches and sent out my survey which received 19 responses which were helpful to prioritising key requirements. An initial requirements document were written up based on my prioritisation then re-written taken into consideration the feedback from the survey. The requirements are then managed in trello where I store them in a backlog and split them into the sprint in the iteration they are currently being worked on. Survey results ?

At the start of the Christmas break I started to focus on implementation. The process involved a lot of setting up and getting used to the Android development environment again which I feel set me back a bit. I achieved during the Christmas break signing up and signing in users to the app. I had hoped to achieve more but found it more challenging to get set up especially after not being able to use php with msserver which was not currently set up and since the uni was on break I could not have it fixed for a while. So I had to use asp.net which was time consuming to get to grips with again. The amount of time spent on the implementation to get only a small amount done has me concerned the project may be too large scope to get what I need done during the time constraints to demonstrate the functionality. I also did not achieve as much as I wanted to in the Christmas break due to illness and a holiday.

The challenges and concerns for the project will be getting participants, time constraints, and only one or two user testing sessions as I may not have enough done by the first iteration to justify a user testing session or it may just be a small session with 2 or 3 participants.

Successes – design choices made, report started, actively using log book, github keeping track,

Appendix – Gantt chart, trello,