Activity Recognition – Natural Running Motion

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# ABSTRACT

In this paper we describe the idea and respective implementation of assignment 4 for Software Architecture for Users Interfaces class. This assignment is based in human activity recognition, the processing of information in order to make interferences about tasks or activities that are taking place.

# INTRODUCTION

After some lost ideas and a lot of discussion we found that running has a potential for activity recognition, but still was vague. There were a lot of potential ideas that can be chosen for developing an activity recognition application, but also almost everything is implemented for runners, mainly indoors equipment.

At first we thought about switching the physical sensors that are used in the indoor equipment for activity recognition sensors, but there was nothing innovative here. This led us to think in outside environment.

When jogging or running many people find it difficult to maintain a controlled rhythmic pace over time, majority tends to start too fast and never get to complete the full period they planned. So, this is a real issue and presents some challenges and innovations of the kind we are trying to achieve.

It went immediately through our mind that music could be the most interesting way to take control of the user’s pace and our first thought was to control by motivation letting the user choosing playlists for worst music and best music of his preference. Although users may be able to achieve the distance and time planned, for sure that doesn’t control our user’s pace.

After some research we find that music beat and rhythm takes effect on user pace, and this is it. This report will explain measures, studies, implementation and heuristic evaluation of using songs playlist to achieve user goals when running.

# Rhythm and beat

Beat is the basic unit of music and is what determines the speed of music which reflects how we keep in time when we dance or even when we tap the foot or fingers. The speed of music is indicated by a tempo mark above the first measure of the musical score, is measured in Beats per Minute and rarely changes during a song. It can be identified in many different ways from easy identifiable drums to the most subtle of pulses emanating throughout the music.

Rhythm is the variation of length and accentuation of a serious of sounds or others events and can be described as the flow of the music over the underlying beat. Is the part of the music that is emotive and most influences our response to the music.

Ideal running music should have many musical elements and should not be just high energy repetitive sounds because can become very boring after a short while. It should contain all the elements of well composed and well constructed music with a great variety enabling the runner to run as they want.

Many people are very disappointed when they take the favorite music out on a run. They are usually filled with excitement that their music will drive them better than ever before, but they find that is not seem to inspire them or help them as much as they expected. This will be due to the fact that the beat and the rhythms are all wrong to the exercise.

# Linking BPM to running speed

We find a research already done by run2rhythm[1], so here follows the table with the results:

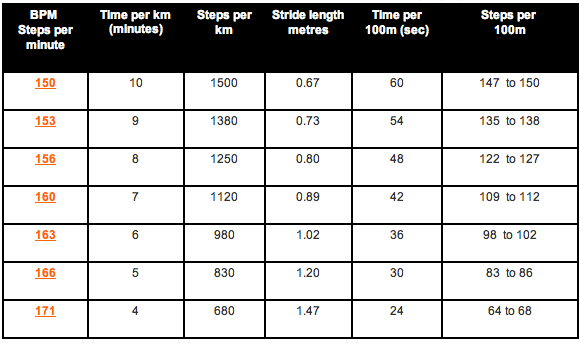


Table – Relationship between BPM and times per Km

We can see that BPM are related with the steps per minute so we can easily relate BPM with distance. With this we can easily build a playlist when user inserts a route plan.

# BEnefits

It is easy to see truly benefits from this relationship:

* Run cadence control
* Bounce in runner step
* Avoid injuries and illness
* Helping the breathing pattern
* Keeps the cadence correct and reinforces the aspect of ideal running
* Better capillary blood flow
* Less muscle fatigue
* Makes you feel good

# Concept

Our concept is to connect your portable media center width some sensor in your body or accessories as Nike and iPod did[2].



This product provides time and distance control, voice feedback and all your favorite music.

Our idea is to use runner favorite music, analyzing the BPM of each one. So when runner inserts a plan (kilometers and time) the music will be chosen by the BPMs in order to achieve the runner goal.

The sensor will be monitoring the runner activity, so if the runner gets slow or faster the playlist will change in order to compensate the runner goal, i.e. If runner get slow the playlist will pick music with higher BPM and vice versa.

# Main Goals

We don’t have opportunity neither time to build all the desire concept so our main goals will be to received data from an accelerometer of wiimote, analyze the received data to compare with step time and distance that we’ve got from the run2rhythm table in order to achieve consistency.

Also we must try to get the BPM from music in order to be able to build playlist that respects a runner plan. After the playlist done we must be able to change it in order of the received information from the wiimote accelerometer.

We have to make a full heuristhic evaluation of our concept, validating the main idea. Are the BPM really related with the steps per minute?

# Implementation

The first challenge we faced was to use the wiimote to measure the steps per minute and the relationship between them and the beats per minute of the music they were listening to while running.

In order to do that we had to connect to the wiimote and acquire the data from the accelerometer in order to measure the movements of the runner.

This quest lead us into a series of interaction library’s in Java which we ended up not using because of a few problems encountered while trying to connect to it to our systems (Mac’s running windows).

After these problems we proceeded the study of the different libraries available and ended up choosing a library (WiimoteLib) in the Microsoft .NET c# language which we choose as our main language to implement various phases of the project.

At first we encountered a few problems to connect the wii to the system because there was a small sync problem that we were not aware and that caused us to loose a lot of time trying to figure out why couldn’t we connect the wiimote to the working software even after it was added correctly to the operating system.

After some search we found out that the operation to add the wiimote to the system had one more step in order for it to be able to connect to our library.

The first application we built had the solo goal of acquiring presenting and registering the data sent via Bluetooth from the wii devices to the computer.

The project is divided in a set of projects where NRM.OO represent the libraries of domain objects, NRM is the Windows forms application that handles the different ineractions with the user: acquiring Data from the wii; handling the data from the user playlist distance of the next run and time to run that distance, and NRM.Analytics represent the library responsible for determining for handling the data handed by the user and building the playlist.

In the NTM.OO library we built a set of classes to represent the data we wanted to handle and that is represented in the diagram bellow.



The class WiiData is the class built to represent a single record of data from the accelerometer, where we record acceleration in three axys (x, y, z).

WiiDataColl is a class that represents a collection of WiiData objects.

BPMInterval is a class meant to represent an interval of BPM’s (beats per minute).

BPM’s

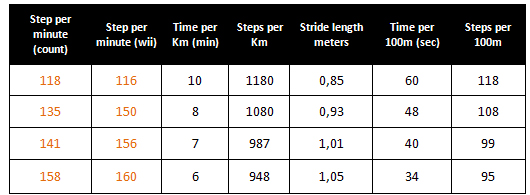
The second part of the project was to implement the construction of a playlist based on the course distance the user wanted to do and the time to accomplish that run.

This task revealed itself more challenging than we expected once the availability of libraries to make this analysis is scarce and have a few details that handicapped our initial expectations. Nonetheless we strived to accomplish this objective and build a playlist based on the users playlist instead of the currently marketed options where u have to buy a predefined set of sounds, this way you could still make use of the music to “keep your pace” but use your own set of songs to be chosen from.

In order to achieve this task we studied a library “Adion’s BPM Detection DLL” that allowed us to calculate the BPM’s of a music.

This library proved itself to be a time consuming pain….

To be continued



# Constrains

Our main constrains were dealing with facebook API and documentation. How can I say: Facebook documentation promises heaven while Facebook API gives us hell.

We find incoherencies between documentation and the API. Some behavior on API is completely different from those that we are used for common web based applications.

We find several problems but I cannot pass without highlighting this one:

Facebook provide a comment board that is defines as being simple to use and you do not need to put any code to make it working. So far so good, the tag name for this object, Facebook Markup Language, is <fb:comment>. Well, it really is, for the start tag, but if you end this object with </fb:comment> it will not work, it must end it </fb:board>. I never saw something like this and this gives us a lot of lost hours. In resume, this object is treated like this:

<fb:comments>

.

</fb:board>

# Future

In next version, we should allow users to insert places where user has been in order to share and to give knowledge of the best places at the identified city.

Other interesting feature is giving to user the ability of creating his own drinks. We know that are typical drinks, and this may be a great way to share regional typical drinks.

# Conclusion

What at first sight looks like a simple and easy application reveals to be complex and much more big and time consuming than we’ve ever imagine.

Although, this project reveals itself interesting and motivating, but also pushed to a hard workload to make things really nice and working.

We had concerns of every kind since documentation, who’s no always to be correct, to the API: is not clear to know how and where to use some objects and features.

At the end we are proud of our work because we can take benefit of the social network to relate physical events, i.e. bring the Facebook to the physical world.

In a short resume we can say: Users can communicate between each others through our application in a variety of ways.

# REFERENCES

1. Run2rhythm

<http://www.run2r.com>

1. Nike and iPod

<http://www.apple.com/ipod/nike/run.html>