

Music Visualizer

Individual Feedback

Subject 1 felt that the music helped him visualize the story of the music, even though it did not add to his understanding of the actual message, per se. Specifically, he stated that the coinciding of heavier rhythms with darker circles and higher tones with lighter circles through the visualizer helped him paint the song as a conflict of lightness and darkness, with good eventually winning out. The utility of the visualizer in thus conveying a story that could only be guessed at through listening was fascinating. Through this connection, though he felt that he did not “understand” the story’s message per se, he was able to feel more in tune with the song itself, a primary goal of the prototype.

Subject 2 felt that the music brought her more in connection with the message. She stated that watching the actions of the shapes on screen helped her see the various rhythms and undertones of the prayer and made it a spiritual experience for her, even if she was not able to understand the song itself. She also tried listening to the words and looking away from the screen and said that because of her cultural unfamiliarity, it was difficult for her to visualize a scene or particular ceremony to associate with that music. On the other hand, the visualizer provided that sense for her, adding more meaning to the music.

Subject 3 did not think that the visualizer added much of a greater understanding. However, this was not because of a flaw in the concept itself. Rather, she felt that the intensity of the colors and of the created animations distracted her from the audio experience instead of augmenting or adding to it. She felt that more visuals could enhance the experience, but there needed to be an option to switch colors or reduce the intensity of animations that the user could control. With that, she said, she would be able to find it augmenting rather than distracting.

Subject 4 stated that the visual aspect added a more accessible aspect to the experience. Interestingly, he stated that he had two different experiences. On one hand, his mind wandered and he went over priorities in his life; on the other, he attempted to listen and comprehend the prayer. He stated that the wandering occurred because he felt as though he were in a room, and perhaps enlarging the visualizer or blocking out background could avoid that mental divergence. Like the others, the visual augmented the music and let him experience it in a different manner. He stated that it had an almost synergistic effect, by which he could understand how the music and graphics fit together.

Overall Insights

In general, the visualizer as prototyped seemed to augment user experience. Everyone felt that it added a visual aspect to the music that audio alone could not simulate or capture. Adding more user control over the particular visuals would be necessary for an even better experience, but as prototyped and explored, users found it a helpful spiritual exercise.

Thumbprint

Individual Feedback

Subject 1 felt that although the process was weird due to the proximity of the person, the overall idea was interesting. He liked the idea of joining thumbs with someone far away to know that others are going through the same feelings but disliked the sensation of direct human touch, even saying that it “directly distracted [him] from reflecting on the moment.” So, the idea of simulating human interaction would be useful for such a user.

Subject 2 found the process somewhat ridiculous; she laughed at a few points in the process because of “how weird” she felt in trying to touch someone through a sheet. However, when she made actual touching contact through the sheet, she visibly relaxed and seemed to reflect and enjoy the moment of connection. In talking after it, though, she echoed many of the sentiments of Subject 1 (whom she was partnered with). Trying to physically touch someone through a sheet was weird, but the overall idea of human interaction was one that she found appealing, for the same reasons that Subject 1 gave. She did state, though, that the connection of touch itself was one that she enjoyed, suggesting that that experience is one that people find valuable.

Subject 3 found the process comforting. For her, attempting to connect to people far away can become difficult because although voices can be heard or faces seen, the tangible aspect of the body becomes forgotten. As a result, human touch let her simulate that connection and made the feelings much more real. For her, the timing was an important aspect that could vary: based on the emotions people were feeling, varying it between 10 to 30 seconds would make a significant impact on how enduring the connection would be or how valuable the experience was for people.

Subject 4 also found the process meaningful. She thought the interface of the blanket, which was very large, covered much of her sphere of vision; focusing in on one point was helpful and let her abstractly focus on the connection. For her, the connection let her channel many of her feelings and helped recognize stress she didn’t realize she was feeling. She also stated that after she moved her hand away, she felt much better about her problems and as though she had realized them more intently because of the connection to another person, presumably facing the same set of difficulties.

Overall Insights

In general, the prototype seemed to accurately simulate the feeling of tangible contact. It also seemed that participants enjoyed the experience and felt that the connection created comfort for them and a meaningful moment to reflect. Much of the awkwardness that people had expressed issues with would likely be fixed by a more remote approach. As such, we seemed to have prototyped the idea correctly and received positive insights into the design space.

To-Do List

Individual Feedback

Subject 1 was overall positive about the idea. She thought that it was very helpful to see what she was doing on an everyday basis in the context of what she wanted to get out of her life. She said she had a tendency to get so caught up in the little things that she can get saddened and caught in a rut. Seeing that the small things she was doing actually were progressing her to something larger was very helpful for her wellbeing. She thought it would be useful to have an app to remind her to do that.

Subject 2 was more critical of the idea. Subject 2 thought that it was unrealistic for people in their early 20s to use large life goals to contextualize their short term goals. He said that he thought long term goals would, at this stage, fluctuate much more wildly than short term goals. We are locked in to short term commitments, he said. For the next few years school is a guaranteed priority. It doesn't do him much good to categorize something that he has to do regardless. He also thought that long term goals were a poor framework in which to contextualize short term goals because they can never take prioritization into account. It is too idealistic, he said, to frame your life in terms of your biggest dreams or goals. He also said that, at this stage, our focus is not on realizing our goals but building our credibility so that we can reach those goals.

Subject 3 was short with her responses and had very little feedback. This is probably in and of itself indicative of how intuitive - or rather unhelpful - she found the idea. She thought that the ways in which her short term goals fit with her long term goals were relatively intuitive. She did not think that having someone state that for her was helpful because she did not think that categorizing her short term goals was something that required much thought or much effort.

Subject 4 was more neutral. He agreed with subject 3 in the sense that he felt he already knew what goals his to-do list was working towards. However, he also felt it showed him what areas of his life he was doing relatively well in. For example, he had many items under working towards a career and no items under maintaining a relationship. As a result, he was able to confirm that he really needed to dedicate some attention to his career at the moment. However, he did not think that his to-do list would be any less linear. He still, in the end, would have to do everything on it. He thought it would have been a more effective reconceptualization had we asked him what his short term goals and then asked him to draw his long term goals from that list. He thought it would have been more valuable to use his short term goals, which he was more sure of, as a way to probe and question the way he formulates his long term goals.

Overall: The overall sentiment was that the idea was interesting and provided a cool way of thinking but that it was neither necessary nor exceptionally innovative. While most of the subjects thought it was helpful to think about their goals in the manner we presented. They didn't think they needed help doing it. They also didn't think it made a real difference, just a

semantic one. We decided that the users were right - this idea wasn't really innovative or very necessary.