

Multimedia Lab

Report

Through My Eyes

LAB Hope - Group 12

Hugo Alexandre dos Santos Carvalho

Inês Machado Ribeiro da Silva Ferraz

Noémia Cardoso Ferreira

Raffael de Castro Rodrigues

Rui Filipe Martins Barbosa

Tiago Furtado Rossini Paula Pinto

Index

Context	
Goals	
Double diamond process description	
Innovation points	
User experience	
Technology and interface specifications	
Conclusions	
References	

1. Context

Through my eyes is an immersive short film that intends to confront viewers with a cruel reality that many pets face silently. This was a project developed for the master's on Multimedia and on Electrical and Computer Engineering and its main focus is to tell a meaningful narrative using digital media.

2. Goals

The main goal of our project is to shock the participant in order to make them understand another's point of view of a problem that is mistreatment of pets. Freedom is a concept that many have as pre-acquired, however, contrary to what many may think, animals dependent on human care, such as pets and livestock, do have 5 freedoms established. (Fraser et al., 1997) It was acknowledged that almost none of these freedoms are respected in different contexts and some want to ignore it, believing that the human in charge of an animal should decide which freedoms to implement. We want those who may experience our digital narrative to stop and start thinking more about others who have no voice to defend themselves.

Using an immersive audiovisual experience we intend to confront the participants with a cruel reality that many animals face silently. We expect each person to change their perception on animal abuse and try to make them an active member of our society in the combat against animal cruelty. Another crucial goal it's to make users reflect on the differences between Human freedom and animal freedom. Questions like : are animal freedoms and human freedoms equal? Should they be equal? Do all deserve them? may arise, and even though there is not a concrete answer it is important to think about them so that, one day, no animal will suffer in the hands of a human who is responsible for it.

3. Double diamond process description

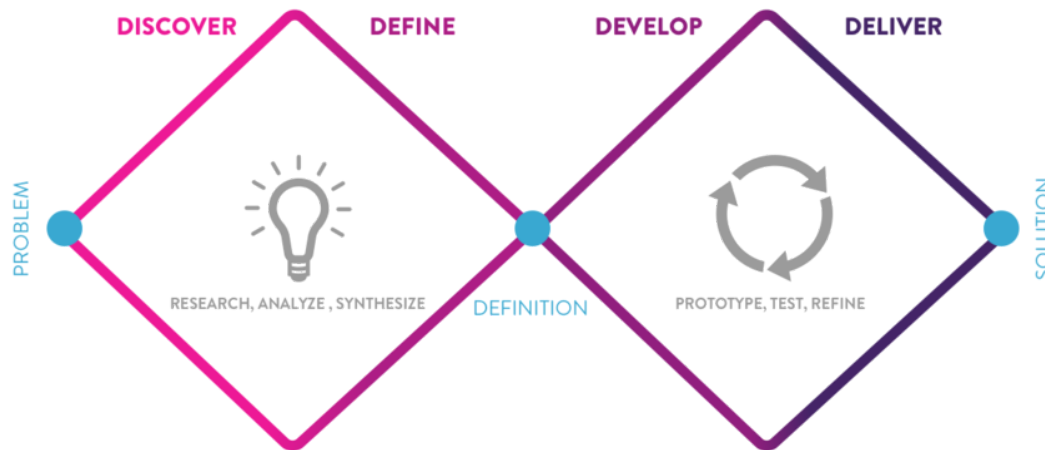


Figure 1. Double diamond process

In order to make our project a reality it was vital to define a methodology capable of guiding us through the development of all the components needed and, at the same time, take advantage of the group's multidisciplinary. For that we were asked to use a double diamond methodology approach defined with 4 main stages (discover; define; develop; deliver). (Figure 1)

3.1 Discover

In this first phase the group was in charge of researching and brainstorming the theme defined (freedom). Different ideas were discussed, like the nudge theory or the concept of free will, but in our understanding these were problematics that were already pretty much discussed. We wanted to approach something new, or at least something that could be easily forgotten. We then began to think about animals and if there were any kind of freedoms stipulated as there are in humans (Vásquez, 2019). We were surprised to find that animals in the care of humans do have 5 freedoms, (Fraser et al., 1997) but we were also surprised to find that most of them were not being applied in different contexts. (Luis et al., 2018) Circus animals, pets and livestock have those freedoms disrespected or not even considered at all. The saddest part is that almost nothing is done about it. (João, 2020) During our

investigation we also tried to find references of narratives that explored animal freedom and also how they were being told. We then found some shorts that helped us later define our narrative.

3.2 Define

It was now time to define our project, what kind of story we could tell and how we could tell it. We ended up using the overall narrative of a short Directed by Zsófia Zsemberi named "Gift". It tells the story of a little girl that was adopted recently by a seemingly loving family. With time the family starts to get tired of the little girl abandoning her. In the end of the short the little girl turns into a dog, confronting the public with the reality of animal abuse and neglect. With the narrative defined we now wanted to try and think in ways we could tell the story in a more immersive and emphatic manner. We thought on how we could make the participant feel like the main character, angry, sad, small and hopeless. It was then decided to use the projection of a video in a small and dark space. The video would be recorded in first person, portraying the daily life of a "child" that was recently adopted. With the use of a first person video, we want to occult the true identity of the character, making the participant question its identity. We would also use loud sounds and a narrator to make the experience even more immersive. The video would be concluded with the abandonment of the character, and then another video would be projected revealing the character's true identity.

3.3 Develop

In this phase we divided each component of the project through the different members of the group. Each component was transformed into different tasks that each and one of us had to conclude : script; storyboard; recordings (video and sound) ; brand and publicity; video editing; documentation; website. We decided to record the video with a smartphone since it was easier to maneuver in small spaces and we didn't intend a video with too much quality, as the granny and fast movement of the phone camera would convey a more immersive and interesting experience. Some tasks were developed in parallel while others depended on the conclusion of others, like the video editing. We decided to remove all the sound of the recordings and use

music and sounds in key moments of the narrative. Transitions were made in the most fluid way possible in order to convey a more appealing experience for the audience. An Instagram account was created to further expose our project and message to a wider public. For the physical experience itself we ended up deciding to use a small tent with an elevated screen, since using a projection could bring problems with visibility as we wanted a somewhat dark space. We also decided it would be interesting for the experience to bring some objects that were important for the narrative, like the cat toy used by the main character and cookies.

3.4 Deliver

Our project was then delivered and presented at

4. Innovation points

We believe that we have an innovative project because most known multimedia projects, using immersive experiences / narratives, are made with a human point of view regarding human and social problems. We believe we were able to express an important message in a quite simple way, without almost any kind of interactivity, as we wanted the user to feel unable to do anything to save or help the main character.

We developed an immersive experience / narrative based on an animal experience and point of view that could perfectly fit on a human one. By making the abusers and the main character incognito it was easier to relate to the story and give the idea that an abuser can be anyone, from the neighbour next door to the TV celebrity.

5. User experience

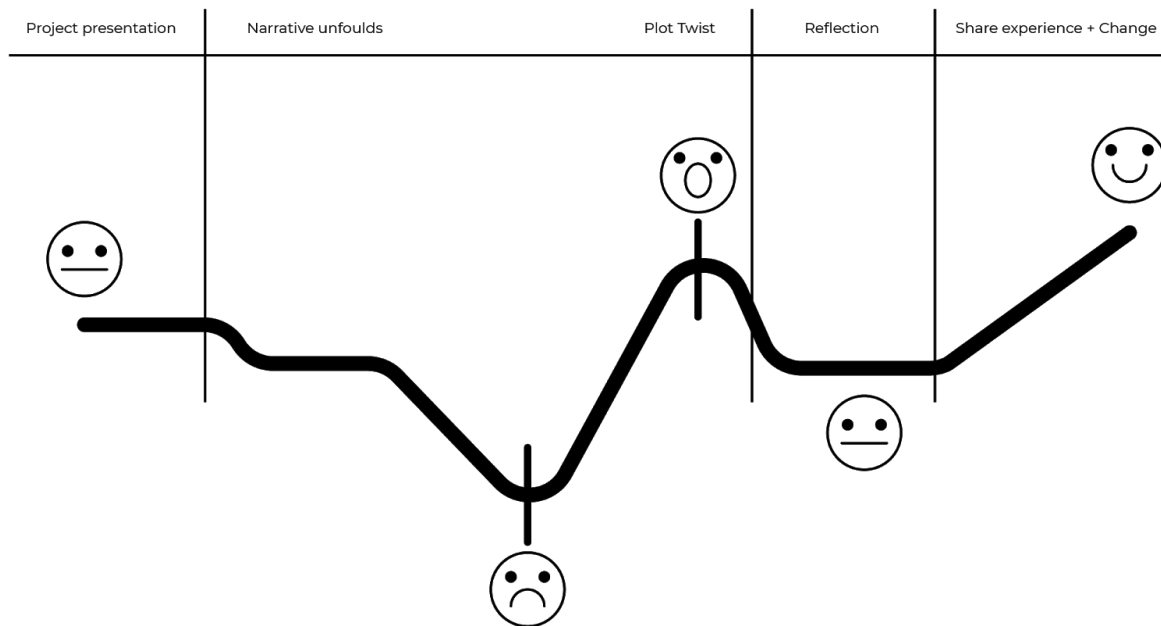


Figure 2. User experience diagram

Initially the user will understand that it is a video about the life of a child that was recently adopted. The first moments of the video will be apparently happy and at key moments the history will be narrated. By this time the user will be a little confused with the purpose of the video, but over time the narrative will distort. Slowly the child is mistreated both physically and psychologically. Strident and violent sounds will be emitted by the space, recreating the experience of the main character in the user. The participant will feel disgusted and angry at everything that the child is going through, however they will only be able to observe, while the story unfolds. The video will end with an unfortunate ending and the user will get up to leave thinking the experience is finished. At that moment another video will be projected showing the child's true identity, a domestic dog. The user will then reinterpret the entire narrative through the eyes of a dog and not a child. The user will reflect on the whole experience, wondering what they saw and why something should be done about it.

Then the participant will be asked to share their experience and eventually will change their perspective on pets.

6. Technology and interface specifications

In terms of technology and interface specifications we opted for very simple and straightforward softwares and electronic components.

Video and sound recording - hitfilm express

Video editing -

Website -

Design -

Publicity -

7. Conclusions

8. References

Ian Vásquez and Tanja Porcnik (2019) Human Freedom Index
<https://www.cato.org/human-freedom-index-new>

Fraser D, Weary D M, Pajor E A and Milligan B N (1997) A scientific conception of animal welfare that reflects ethical concerns Animal Welfare 6: 187-205.
<https://www.wellbeingintlstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=ethawel>

Zsófia Zsemeri (2015) Gift [Youtube]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMs7dkdO4YY>

João Francisco Gomes (2020) Observador. Maus tratos a animais. Só 5% das denúncias chegam a julgamento e a maioria é punida apenas com multa
<https://observador.pt/2020/05/24/maus-tratos-a-animais-so-5-das-denuncias-chegam-a-julgamento-e-a-maioria-e-punida-apenas-com-multa/>

Luis Ribeiro, Sara Rodrigues (2018) Visão. Toda a verdade sobre a violência escondida contra animais em Portugal
<https://visao.sapo.pt/atualidade/sociedade/2018-02-03-toda-a-verdade-sobre-a-violencia-escondida-contra-animais-em-portugal/>