

AGA

Advanced Guidance Assistance

Interim Report

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BSc in Computer Science

(International)

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Abstract

The Advanced Guidance Assistance (AGA) bot is a tool designed specifically to support individuals with ADHD in managing their daily tasks and routines. It acts as a personal assistant that provides structured guidance, reminders, and encouragement to help users stay focused and on track throughout their day. With features like customisable task lists, real-time alerts, and adaptive goal setting, AGA helps reduce stress, anxiety and improve time management, making it easier to build healthier habits and maintain productivity.

Its user-friendly interface and supportive approach aim to empower users to navigate their day more effectively and confidently.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work described in this dissertation is, except where otherwise stated, entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university.

Signed:

\_\_Lovely Fernandez\_\_\_\_

Lovely Joy Velasco Fernandez

04th November 2024

Table of Contents

[1. Introduction 7](#_Toc183885791)

[1.1 Project Background 7](#_Toc183885792)

[What is ADHD? 7](#_Toc183885793)

[Difficulties and Challenges of ADHD 7](#_Toc183885794)

[Strategies in how to manage ADHD 7](#_Toc183885795)

[AGA’s Solutions and Benefits 8](#_Toc183885796)

[1.2. Project Overview 12](#_Toc183885797)

[Project Aim 12](#_Toc183885798)

[Name of Origin 12](#_Toc183885799)

[Product Description 12](#_Toc183885800)

[Product Slogan 13](#_Toc183885801)

[Colour Palette 14](#_Toc183885802)

[Unique Selling Feature 14](#_Toc183885803)

[1.3 Stakeholders 14](#_Toc183885804)

[Focus Group 14](#_Toc183885805)

[Investors 15](#_Toc183885806)

[Other 15](#_Toc183885807)

[1.4. Project Scope 15](#_Toc183885808)

[Future Scope 16](#_Toc183885809)

[1.5. Thesis Roadmap 17](#_Toc183885810)

[2. Literature Review 18](#_Toc183885811)

[2.1. Competitors and Existing Solutions 18](#_Toc183885812)

[Non-Technical Solutions 18](#_Toc183885813)

[Technical Solutions 18](#_Toc183885814)

[Issues with Existing Solutions 19](#_Toc183885815)

[AGA’s Approach to Identified Issues 19](#_Toc183885816)

[2.2 Requirements 19](#_Toc183885817)

[Functional 19](#_Toc183885818)

[Non-Functional 20](#_Toc183885819)

[2.3. Project Technologies and System Deliverables 20](#_Toc183885820)

[Programming Languages and Frameworks 20](#_Toc183885821)

[Software Infrastructure 21](#_Toc183885822)

[Hardware Requirements 21](#_Toc183885823)

[Deliverables 21](#_Toc183885824)

[2.4. Other Research 22](#_Toc183885825)

[Existing Final Year Project 22](#_Toc183885826)

[3. System Design 24](#_Toc183885827)

[3.1. Software Methodology 24](#_Toc183885828)

[Development Methodology 24](#_Toc183885829)

[3.2. Overview of System 25](#_Toc183885830)

[System Architecture 26](#_Toc183885831)

[3.3. Requirement Analysis 26](#_Toc183885832)

[Use Case Diagrams 26](#_Toc183885833)

[Class Analysis 31](#_Toc183885834)

[Class and Sequence Diagram 32](#_Toc183885835)

[Database Diagram (ERD) 33](#_Toc183885836)

[3.4. Project Design 34](#_Toc183885837)

[Web App and Bot Sitemap 34](#_Toc183885838)

[Web App GUI Prototype 34](#_Toc183885839)

[AGA Bot GUI Prototype 36](#_Toc183885840)

[4. Testing and Evaluation 38](#_Toc183885841)

[4.1. Understanding Users Needs 38](#_Toc183885842)

[Questionnaire Form 38](#_Toc183885843)

[Results of Questionnaire 39](#_Toc183885844)

[Findings 41](#_Toc183885845)

[4.2. Prototype Testing 43](#_Toc183885846)

[Challenges 43](#_Toc183885847)

[Focus Mode Testing Plan 01 43](#_Toc183885848)

[Bot Facial Expressions Testing Plan 02 44](#_Toc183885849)

[5. Prototype Development 45](#_Toc183885850)

[5.1. Focus Mode 45](#_Toc183885851)

[Face Detection 45](#_Toc183885852)

[5.2 AGA’s Facial Expressions 46](#_Toc183885853)

[Expressions 46](#_Toc183885854)

[6. Project Management 47](#_Toc183885855)

[6.1. Project Plan 47](#_Toc183885856)

[Milestones & Roadmap 47](#_Toc183885857)

[Task Distribution 48](#_Toc183885858)

[6.2. Supervisor Engagement 49](#_Toc183885859)

[Meeting Availability 49](#_Toc183885860)

[6.3. Risk Management 49](#_Toc183885861)

[Technical Risks 49](#_Toc183885862)

[User Risks 50](#_Toc183885863)

[Project Management 50](#_Toc183885864)

[Legal and Regulatory Risks 50](#_Toc183885865)

[Steps for Effective Risk Management 50](#_Toc183885866)

[6.4. Project Plan for Next Phase 51](#_Toc183885867)

[Plans and Future Work (Future Scope) 51](#_Toc183885868)

[Bibliography 52](#_Toc183885869)

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

### What is ADHD?

ADHD, *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder,* is a neurological condition that affects one’s ability to focus, manage impulses, and regulate their energy levels. Individuals with ADHD may experience symptoms such as inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity which can impact their daily life, relationships, academic performance, and work.

*“ADHD is considered a chronic and debilitating disorder and is known to impact the individual in many aspects of their life including academic and professional achievements, interpersonal relationships and daily functioning.”* (*What Is ADHD?*, n.d.)

### Difficulties and Challenges of ADHD

According to the DSM-5, there are three presentations of ADHD – *predominantly inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive* and *combination* of the two types– where each type faces various challenges from lack of focus and organisation to issues with impulsivity and hyper-fixation. (‘Diagnosis of ADHD in Adults’, n.d.)

Individuals with inattentive ADHD often struggle to stay focused on tasks or activities, with difficulties in concentration leading to incomplete tasks. They may become easily distracted, frequently misplace or lose items, and face challenges with organisation. This can lead to forgetting daily responsibilities like chores, errands, paying bills, making calls, and attending appointments.

*“…adults with ADHD are more likely to experience memory problems, restlessness and lack of mental focus.”* (*Strategies for Adults Living With ADHD | Psychiatrists in California*, n.d.)

On the other hand, individuals with hyperactive-impulsive ADHD often display restless behaviours, such as fidgeting, squirming, or tapping. They may also hyper-fixate on specific topics or activities for extended periods, disrupting their daily balance and leading to neglect of other essential tasks, responsibilities, and personal needs. This intense focus can eventually result in burnout, which may impact their sense of self-worth and diminish self-esteem.

*“Adults with ADHD may experience poor self-worth, sensitivity towards criticism, and increased self-criticism possibly stemming from higher levels of criticism throughout life.”* (*ADHD - Brainwave Psychiatry and Wellness LLC*, 2024)

Lastly, individuals may also experience a combination of both types of ADHD, facing a mixture of the challenges associated with inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity. Individuals struggling with ADHD affects their ability to have a life balance which in long-term affects their ability to manage work/academic responsibilities, develop a sense of self-confidence and self-worth, and engage in hobbies or recreational activities.

### Strategies in how to manage ADHD

In the article *"Strategies for Adults Living with ADHD"* from Advanced Psychiatry Associates, (*Strategies for Adults Living With ADHD | Psychiatrists in California*, n.d.), five core elements are highlighted to help manage ADHD challenges effectively:

**Organisation**  
Prepare a daily schedule each evening for the following day and review it each morning. This builds awareness of responsibilities and tasks, giving individuals greater control over their day. Focusing on one task at a time is key to staying on track. Effective time management is also essential: allot extra time for tasks and set reminders and timers to keep on schedule.

**Routine**  
Establishing consistent patterns of behaviour allows individuals to focus on other areas while ensuring that daily tasks are completed. Setting routines for chores, with the help of notifications and reminders, can reinforce habits. For example, setting a monthly reminder for fixed bills and budgeting can provide more control over finances and reduce last-minute stress.

**Make Big Tasks Manageable**  
Breaking large tasks into smaller, achievable steps can reduce feelings of overwhelm, making complex tasks more approachable and allowing for steady progress, one step at a time. Prioritisation is also essential: focus on one item at a time, starting with the most challenging task of the day to make the rest of the day feel lighter.

**Minimise Distractions**  
Creating a clutter-free, minimal environment helps reduce distractions, leading to improved focus and productivity.

**Respect Your Limits**  
Recognising your limits allows for realistic planning, ensuring that daily tasks are achievable. This reduces the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed and increases the satisfaction of completing tasks. Allocate time for well-being activities like quick walks or exercise, which help reduce stress and promote relaxation. Give yourself permission to pause, breathe, and recharge.

Following these core elements can help individuals build self-worth and create a more balanced approach to managing ADHD. Establishing structure and setting realistic goals boosts confidence, while maintaining a routine to reduce overwhelm.

### AGA’s Solutions and Benefits

After examining the challenges faced by individuals with ADHD and reviewing commonly used strategies to address them, I have identified the essential features AGA can provide as practical tools, as well as how these will benefit individuals in managing their daily lives more effectively.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 01 | Focus Mode | | High Priority |
| **Description**  A concentration detection device that alerts users when they lose focus on a task or, if it senses signs of intense focus, recommends taking break.  **Benefits**  This feature supports a healthy balance between task responsibilities and personal well-being. | | | |
| **Functionality**  The device will detect user’s eyes and other body parts to analyse one’s concentration on a task.   * Loses Focus   If the user’s vision diverts from the task at hand, with supporting signs like stillness or looking away for an extended period, the device will interpret this as a loss of focus and alert the user by turning red. *A sound alert may also be added.*   * Hyper Focus   If the user has spent an extended period on the task, the device will notify them to take a break.  The system will count from when the user starts the task. | | **Concept Sketch**  **A drawing of a cartoon character reading a book  Description automatically generated**  **A drawing of a snake  Description automatically generatedA drawing of a cartoon  Description automatically generated**  *Figure 1.1.A Focus Mode* | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 02 | Task Setter | | High Priority |
| **Description**  A tool that reminds the user of the tasks that need to be completed for the day. It will send notifications throughout the day, updating on what’s left to do and what has been completed. Finally, in the evening, it will give a preview of the next day’s tasks to help the user prepare.  **Benefits**  This tool helps the user stay on top of their tasks. By providing a clear overview of what needs to be done, it reduces anxiety and overwhelm, giving the user a better sense of control over their day. The evening reminders for the next day’s tasks also allow them to anticipate what’s coming up and prepare. | | | |
| **Functionality**  The tool will receive tasks through AGA’s web application. It will capture the task name, due date and time, and allow users to assign a priority level to manage urgent tasks first. | | **Concept Sketch**  **A whiteboard with writing on it  Description automatically generated**  *Figure 1.1.B Task Setter* | |
| 03 | Weather API | | Mid Priority |
| **Description**  AGA monitors the weather and provides helpful advice to users based on current conditions.  **Benefits**  This feature helps users prepare for their day, minimising any disruptions caused by unexpected weather changes. It’s especially useful for individuals who may often overlook daily details, such as those with ADHD, who might forget to check or be aware of the weather forecast. | | | |
| **Functionality**  Using the weather API, AGA retrieves the day's weather details and then accesses a JSON file to find the most suitable suggestion for the user.  For instance, if rain is expected, AGA might suggest, “It looks like it may rain today; I recommend bringing an umbrella!” | | **Concept Sketch**  **A paper with writing on it  Description automatically generated**  *Figure 1.1.C Weather API* | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 04 | Mood Log | | Mid Priority |
| **Description**  The mood tracker records the user’s overall mood each day and provides weekly and monthly insights into how they’ve been feeling.  **Benefits**  This offers a valuable overview of the user’s mental well-being, supporting self-reflection and a deeper understanding of personal emotional patterns | | | |
| **Functionality**  The user logs their mood through the mood tracker, which is saved in the database. This data is then displayed on a graph, allowing for easy viewing of weekly or monthly mood trends. | | **Concept Sketch**  **A white paper with text and a diagram  Description automatically generated**  *Figure 1.1.D Mood Log* | |
| 05 | Daily Affirmations | | Low Priority |
| **Description**  Upon each first login to the web app, the user is greeted with a daily affirmation message to start their day on a positive note  **Benefits**  This feature supports mental well-being, a core area where individuals with ADHD often face challenges. The affirmation serves as a reminder of their value and something positive to look forward to each day. | | | |
| **Functionality**  Using a random generator, AGA selects a message from a JSON file containing a list of daily affirmations, which is then displayed to the user. | | **Concept Sketch**  **A drawing of a phone  Description automatically generated**  *Figure 1.1.E Daily Affirmations* | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 06 | Well-Being Tools | Low Priority |
| **Description**  This tool offers a range of features focused on well-being, including mindfulness activities like breathing exercises and reflection time, an activity recommender, and a balance system that tracks work and activity hours.  **Mindfulness Activities**  These are scheduled notifications prompting the user to engage in activities like breathing exercises or reflection time. AGA guides the user through each step, for example, instructing them to "breathe in and breathe out" during breathing exercises and providing positive reinforcement along the way.  **Activity Recommender**  This feature introduces users to new learning or recreational activities, which stimulate the mind and improve mental health.  **Balance System**  This system tracks the user’s overall work and activity hours, alerting them to any imbalance between work and relaxation. By bringing awareness to any disparities, it helps users understand areas needing improvement, potentially uncovering sources of stress. | | |
| **Concept Sketch**  **A white board with black writing  Description automatically generated**  *Figure 1.1.F Well-being Tools* | | |

## 1.2. Project Overview

### Project Aim

The Advanced Guidance Assistant, *AGA*, is designed to support individuals with ADHD in managing daily tasks and maintaining a structured, balanced lifestyle. ADHD often brings unique challenges, such as difficulties with *organisation, time management, and task prioritisation*, which can make daily routines feel overwhelming. AGA aims to provide tailored guidance and assistance to help users tackle these challenges through a structured, user-friendly approach.

By integrating supportive tools and strategies, AGA empowers users to take control of their routines, reduce stress, and enhance their quality of life.

### Name of Origin

“AGA” is derived from the word “Agape,” meaning “*unconditional love*” in Latin. This term holds personal significance to me, so I wanted to incorporate it into my final year project. Additionally, in Korean, AGA (“아가”) means “*baby*,” which I felt added a light, approachable touch, presenting AGA as a kind of companion. With this, I decided on the name for my product, which can also be an abbreviation for Advanced Guidance Assistance.

### Product Description

AGA is designed as a cubic bot with a leaf on top, embodying the values of balance, growth, and resilience. The cube shape, with its six equal square faces, symbolises unity and balance, while the stable square base represents a strong foundation - *a solid core*.

A drawing of two cubes with leaves

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 1.2.A AGA Mascot*

This reflects AGA's mission to help users find stability and balance in their lives, strengthening their sense of self. The leaf on top signifies growth and the journey of self-discovery and improvement that users embark upon with AGA.

This idea was inspired by Peter Cromwell’s book, “Polyhedra”, which explores the symbolic significance of the cube as a representation of stability. As Cromwell stated in page 55, “The cube stands upright on a square base, expressing stability.” (Cromwell, 1997)

The cube design also holds personal meaning for me, as it reminds me of my primary school maths class, where we used unit cubes to visualise mathematical logic. As units build up into tens, hundreds, thousands and eventually form larger cubes, they represent progressive growth. Metaphorically, each unit marks the first step toward a goal - starting with one, then ten, then a hundred, then a thousand - ultimately forming a larger whole. This illustrates that each accomplishment is both a milestone and a stepping stone toward an even bigger journey.

A drawing of a diagram

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 1.2.B The Cycle of a Unit*

This concept forms the foundation of AGA's design, symbolising an individual's journey through life, filled with growth, unity, and the pursuit of life balance. It reflects my life perspective that balance is key to finding peace and harmony in life.

### Product Slogan

In the *Project Overview (Figure 1.2.B)*, the concept of units is used to represent the first steps toward a goal which inspires the slogan “*One Unit at a Time*” where each unit symbolises a step, task, or goal in the individual’s journey.

A white board with black text

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 1.2.C AGA’s Slogan*

### Colour Palette

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Primary Colours** | |
| #7ed348 | #e1f8fe |
| **Secondary Colours** | |
| #009d01 | #97e7fb |

### Unique Selling Feature

This is what makes AGA unique - it provides a physical product solution that helps users disconnect from their phones, addressing one of the biggest challenges with modern application solutions. Many current tools are only a swipe away from distraction, keeping users tied to their devices and vulnerable to interruptions.

*“Digital distraction refers to the interference caused by digital devices in our lives, leading to decreased productivity, negative impacts on our mental and emotional health, and even physical consequences.”* (*Digital Distraction and Its Impact on Your Health*, n.d.)

AGA, however, offers a simplified distraction-free web-application, allowing users to stay focused without the constant pull of social media and other online distractions. I chose to deliver part of this project through a web application, allowing users to engage with it on various devices, including laptops and desktops, rather than relying solely on a mobile phone.

This multi-device accessibility reduces the dependency on phones, therefore, minimising potential distractions from other mobile applications. AGA’s straightforward approach ensures that users can engage with their tasks without unnecessary complexity.

## 1.3 Stakeholders

### Focus Group

The target market primarily focuses on individuals with ADHD, but also includes students as a secondary user group.

**Primary Users**AGA’s tools are designed to fully support individuals with all three types of ADHD - *inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, and combined*. These users often face challenges with focus, organisation, and task management. AGA’s features, such as Focus Mode, help users find a balance between responsibilities and hobbies, while the Task Setter with reminder functions reduces forgetfulness and supports effective planning.

**Secondary Users**The secondary target market is students who are trying to balance academic responsibilities with personal life. Focus Mode can assist students in maintaining concentration to complete their tasks, while also encouraging time for self-care and personal activities. With the Task Setter, students can set reminders for assignments, exams, and other deadlines. The priority feature enables AGA to order the tasks, therefore, allowing the user to focus on one task at a time.

With this targeted market base, AGA is open to various possibilities and opportunities - although developed with individuals with ADHD in mind, AGA is versatile and can also benefit anyone looking for more balance and structure in their lives, such as students or professionals managing demanding schedules.

### Investors

With mental health, particularly ADHD, gaining global attention, there is significant raise in investment for innovative digital health solutions. Recent initiatives, such as the UKRI Mindset XR Innovator Support Programme (Farnley, 2024) and Innovate UK’s £3.2 million investment in immersive mental health projects (*Innovate UK Invests £3.2m to Improve Mental Health Services*, 2024), highlight the drive to develop accessible, mental health technology-based tools. By using tools like XR (Extended Reality), these programs are helping tackle everything from ADHD to depression, making well-being tools more available and affordable.

Importantly, targeted investments in ADHD-focused solutions, like Inflow's €2 million funding for an ADHD self-management app (*UK Founded Inflow Boosted by €2M Raise for ADHD App*, 2022), showcase the rising demand for digital tools that help individuals manage ADHD symptoms through evidence-based techniques.

With the growing focus on balancing ADHD support and mental well-being, AGA aligns perfectly with these investment interests and contributes to the movement of improving people’s mental health.

### Other

The stakeholders for AGA include both internal and external groups. Internally, they consist of myself as the developer, my supervisor Bojan Bozic, and TUD staff who will be examining this project. Externally, stakeholders consist of primary and secondary users; *individuals with ADHD* and *students* respectively, as well as *investors* in the healthcare tech industry who are interested in supporting innovative mental health solutions. Healthcare professionals, including psychiatrists and psychologists, are essential for validating the tool and potentially recommending it to patients.

Additionally, mental health advocates, educational institutions that could adopt AGA as a support tool for students, and government bodies focused on mental health initiatives and accessible solutions are key stakeholders in this project.

## 1.4. Project Scope

The project scope of AGA includes the following components:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **Focus Mode** A tool to monitor concentration levels, detecting when a user loses focus or becomes hyper-focused. It provides prompts to help users regain focus or take breaks as needed. * **Task Setter** A task management feature that allows users to set daily tasks, assign priority levels, and receive notifications throughout the day to help them stay on track. * **Weather Integration** A feature that checks the day’s weather forecast and provides recommendations to help users prepare for weather conditions that may impact their plans. | * **Mood Log** A mood-tracking tool that enables users to log their daily mood and view weekly and monthly trends, supporting self-reflection and mental well-being. * **Daily Affirmations** Delivers a positive affirmation on each first login to help boost user morale and encourage a positive mindset. * **Well-Being Tools** A collection of mindfulness and well-being features, including breathing exercises, activity recommendations, and a balance system to monitor work and relaxation time. |

### Future Scope

Future developments for AGA could include several additional features to further support individuals with ADHD in managing daily routines and essential needs:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **Food and Water Reminders** Since individuals with ADHD may often forget to eat or drink regularly, AGA could provide gentle reminders throughout the day to help users meet these basic needs and maintain a healthy lifestyle. * **Routine Guide with Machine Learning** Using machine learning, AGA could learn users' habits and routines over time, automatically setting reminders for repetitive tasks, such as taking medication, daily exercise, or other regular activities. | * **Map and Navigation** AGA could include a feature where users hold the cube as it provides audio-guided directions, like a GPS. This would be particularly useful for individuals who may feel overwhelmed with navigation. * **AGA Locator** For users who frequently misplace items, AGA could incorporate a tracking feature. By activating a button on the web app, users could make the cube beep, making it easier to locate AGA if misplaced. This feature would be especially helpful for individuals with ADHD who often lose important items. |

A drawing of a person and a plant

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 1.4.A Project Concept & Deliverables*

These components are delivered through AGA's physical cube device and a web application. The physical cube provides direct interaction for features like Focus Mode, while the web application allows users to set up and manage Task Setters for the cube such as task details and assigning priorities.

## 1.5. Thesis Roadmap

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Introduction and Project Background**   This section provides an in-depth study of ADHD, defining the condition, identifying key challenges, and exploring how AGA can serve as a potential solution.   1. **Literature Review and Existing Solutions**   A review of existing solutions and competitors, analysing their strengths and limitations, and comparing them to AGA’s unique offerings.   1. **Project Planning and Feasibility Analysis**   Establishes the project management framework and assesses the feasibility and potential success of AGA, considering its impact and usefulness.   1. **Design and Prototyping**   Focuses on selecting the colour palette, UI design, and overall aesthetics of AGA to create a clear vision for the final product. In addition, creating a prototype version to visualise the final product.   1. **System Architecture and Code Implementation**   Covers use cases, requirements analysis, and system modelling to guide the coding process and ensure structured implementation. | 1. **Testing and Evaluation**   Defines test scenarios, use cases, and testing formats to thoroughly evaluate AGA’s functionality and effectiveness.   1. **Refinement and Final Review**   Based on test results, this timeframe is used to refine the code and functionality, enhancing AGA’s performance and user experience (UX).   1. **Documentation and Project Launch Preparation**   Finalises all project documentation, including final reports, the user manual, and any additional necessary deliverables.   1. **Official Website Development and Project Submission**   Creates a home landing page introducing AGA’s features and benefits, while finalising the project or overview report for submission with all required components. |

Refer to *Project Management section (6.1.1 Milestones and Roadmap)* to review the specific objectives outlined for the project. This section details key milestones which define the project's goals and intended outcomes.

# 2. Literature Review

This section explores existing solutions, highlighting both similarities to and differences from AGA, to identify the unique features that set AGA apart. It also examines the technologies essential for delivering the project, including tools, frameworks, and platforms best suited to its specific needs.

By reviewing the functional and non-functional requirements of AGA’s system, this section establishes a foundation for creating key design elements such as use cases, class analysis, sequence diagrams, class diagrams, and database diagrams which serve as the building blocks for the project's development.

## 2.1. Competitors and Existing Solutions

Understanding the market competition is essential for defining the value and uniqueness of the project. This section analyses current competitors and existing solutions, evaluating their features, strengths, and limitations.

By identifying what these solutions do well and where they fall short, it highlights how the project can stand out and meet unmet needs. This research also uncovers opportunities for AGA to evolve and improve.

### Non-Technical Solutions

Individuals with ADHD often face challenges in managing focus, organisation, and distractions, which can impact their productivity and daily functioning. Non-technical solutions, such as behavioural therapy and practical strategies as outlined in the Introduction (*Section 1, 1.1: What is ADHD?*), are commonly recommended to help individuals manage ADHD effectively. These strategies, include developing organisational systems, minimising distractions, and setting realistic limits to avoid overwhelm.

These solutions have been carefully considered when designing the features of AGA, offering tools that align with these principles such as Focus Mode - *helps users maintain concentration* - and a Task Setter - *supports structured planning with prioritisation*. These core components, along with other smaller features, aim to provide individuals with a platform to reinforce ADHD management strategies. By integrating these tools, AGA aims to encourage individuals to maintain a healthy balanced lifestyle.

### Technical Solutions

#### goblin.tools

A black text on a white background

Description automatically generated

*“goblin.tools is a collection of small, simple, single-task tools, mostly designed to help neurodivergent people with tasks they find overwhelming or difficult.”* (*About - GoblinTools*, n.d.)

One of the most useful tools in goblin.tools is *Magic Todo* and *Estimator*, a task management system where userscan input tasks and allow the tool to generate step-by-step breakdowns, adjusting the level of detail using a scale as well as, edit, reorder, and estimate the time required for each task, promoting better planning.

The platform uses a web-based architecture while offering mobile applications for iOS and Android, providing accessibility and ease of use across devices.

Although goblin.tools offers valuable features, its weaknesses include inconsistent time estimations, often providing different range suggestions when repeatedly submitting the same task, and vague or overly complex task breakdowns when inputs are unclear.

goblin.tools provides a strong foundation for assisting neurodivergent individuals with task management. Similarly, AGA aims to support users in managing tasks effectively but takes a different approach by emphasising the ease of adding tasks and automatically ordering them based on assigned priority weights. This method is designed to make task management more intuitive and user-friendly.

#### Orotmi

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated

*“An Ortomi is an incredibly simple creature, designed specifically to provide companionship, comfort & emotional support – just like a real pets do!”* (*Ortomi - The Adorable Robot Companion*, 2024)

Ortomi is a companion robot build to recreate the emotional connection typically found with real pets, designed to improve mental wellness and alleviate feelings of loneliness, particularly during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. While Ortomi emphasises emotional support and alleviating loneliness, AGA aims to be a practical companion for individuals, especially people dealing with ADHD, to help them organise their tasks and manage their lives more effectively.

Inspired by Ortomi’s design, AGA aims to achieve Orotomi’s friendly and engaging interactions by incorporating expressive facial features with intent to enhance user engagement and foster a supportive relationship, making AGA not just a productivity tool but also a relatable companion for motivation and support.

### Issues with Existing Solutions

After researching existing solutions, a common issue became apparent, most apps marketed for supporting individuals with ADHD primarily focus on task scheduling. While task organisation is a significant challenge for people with ADHD, these apps often overlook other critical struggles, such as maintaining concentration or the ability to prioritise tasks. This trend is evident in many apps, for example, *HelloKlarity* suggested 12 apps for ADHD where at least 5 apps were schedulers for time management. (*Top 12 ADHD Apps In 2024*, 2024)

### AGA’s Approach to Identified Issues

AGA aims to address this problem by offering more than just task scheduling features but also its Focus Mode tool, designed to help users stay concentrated on tasks such as assignments or work. In addition, the ability to assign priority weights to tasks allows users to clearly identify and focus on what needs to be done first. AGA ensures that users are better equipped to manage their responsibilities effectively and build good habits for productivity.

## 2.2 Requirements

### Functional

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Description** |
| Focus Mode | Detects user's focus and alerts for loss of concentration or hyper-focus, encouraging breaks. |
| Task Setter | Provides task reminders, updates throughout the day, and next-day task previews. |
| Weather API | Retrieves weather data and offers actionable suggestions based on current conditions. |
| Mood Log | Logs daily moods and provides insights on weekly and monthly trends. |
| Daily Affirmations | Displays a daily affirmation message upon first login to boost positivity. |
| Well-being Tools | Offers mindfulness activities, activity recommendations, and a balance system to track work-life hours. |

### Non-Functional

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Description** |
| Camera Security and Usability Restrictions | |  | | --- | | Limits camera functionality to protect user safety and privacy. |  |  | | --- | |  | |
| Adherence to Legal Principles | Ensures compliance with data protection and privacy laws such as GDPR. |
| Data Minimisation | Collects only the minimum necessary data for functionalities. |
| Purpose Limitation | Uses data solely for its stated purpose with transparency to users. |
| Consent Management | Requires explicit user consent before data collection or sharing. |
| Data Retention Policy | Retains data only as long as necessary for its intended purpose. |
| Data Integrity | Maintains data accuracy, completeness, and reliability. |
| Right to Erasure | Allows users to request deactivation or deletion of their data. |
| Regulation and Law | Users should meet the standard age to access the website. |

## 2.3. Project Technologies and System Deliverables

### Programming Languages and Frameworks

The project incorporates a range of programming languages and frameworks to ensure efficient development and compatibility across all different devices.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Next.js**  The Next.js framework will enhance performance by enabling server-side rendering, allowing the application to be accessed across multiple devices efficiently. |
|  | **HTML | CSS | JavaScript**  Core web technologies will be used to build the foundation of the application. HTML structures the content, CSS ensures responsive design, and JavaScript enables dynamic interactions. |
|  | **Python**  Chosen for its simplicity, robust library, and compatibility with hardware components. Python’s flexibility makes it an ideal choice for implementing core functionality on Raspberry Pi. |

### Software Infrastructure

The software infrastructure includes weather APIs for dynamic, location-based updates and a real-time synchronised database to ensure consistent data sharing across the system.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A logo of a drop of water  Description automatically generated | **Firebase**  Acts as the project’s primary database, storing user data, task lists, preferences, and progress. Firebase’s real-time database capabilities ensure smooth synchronisation and scalability across devices. |
| A logo with different colored letters  Description automatically generated | **Google APIs**  Using Google APIs to connect the app with external tools such as weather APIs. |

### Hardware Requirements

AGA, the physical component of this project will utilise a Raspberry Pi as its central hardware component, with the following elements:

* **Camera**: To monitor user focus and detect signs of hyperfocus for the Focus Mode feature.
* **Microphone**: To enable voice interaction and command recognition.
* **Display**: A screen to present well-being messages, and for facial expressions of the robot for an engaging user experience.
* **Speaker**: For delivering audio feedback, reminders, and well-being cues.

*\*If the Raspberry Pi setup is not feasible, the project can be adapted into a mobile application, leveraging the phone’s built-in hardware - camera, microphone, and speaker.*

The technical framework, incorporating technologies such as Next.js, Firebase, and a robust MVC architecture, ensures scalability, reliability, and an enhanced user experience. AGA’s physical component, powered by Raspberry Pi, integrates interactive hardware such as a camera, microphone, display, and speaker. These components enable features like focus detection, voice commands, expressive feedback, and audio cues, creating a user-friendly, engaging, and distraction-free environment.

### Deliverables

The deliverables for this project include two distinct components*: a web application* and *a robot product*, each designed to offer and support specific features of AGA.

A drawing of a machine and a robot

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 2.3.B Project Deliverables*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Web Application includes:**   * Task Setter * Mood Log * Daily Affirmations | **Robot Product includes:**   * Focus Mode * Weather API * Well-Being Tools |

The web application was chosen to ensure accessibility across multiple devices, allowing users to manage their tasks and mood logs. AGA, the physical product, is designed to reduce reliance on mobile phones by providing a simplified, distraction-free interface, particularly during study or work sessions. It discourages phone usage during focused activities, helping users stay on task and minimise distractions.

## 2.4. Other Research

### Existing Final Year Project

As part of the research for this project, I explored previous fourth-year projects from earlier years to gain insights and identify similarities to my own concept.

#### Deep

“This project is focused on designing and developing a web application that serves as a tool for enhancing productivity and effective time management. In today’s digital world, the issue of distractions and lack of focus has become increasingly widespread, creating challenges for individuals attempting to maintain productivity and accomplish their goals.

To address this concern, the project aims to offer a practical and user-friendly solution that promotes focus and minimizes distractions. The web application enables users to effectively organize and manage tasks, while also providing visibility into deadlines. Additionally, it offers insights into the time spent on work, helping users optimize their productivity.” (*Deep, James Carswell (2023)*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Author** | James Carswell C19749651 |
| **Description**  This web application is designed to create a distraction-free environment, helping users, particularly university students, focus on long, meaningful work sessions. It acts as an immersive productivity tool for organising tasks and managing work sessions effectively. | |
| **Complexity of the Project**  The complexity of this project arises from multiple factors, including understanding and addressing user behaviour to promote focus, processing real-time data for task tracking, and providing personalised analytics through intuitive visualisations. Additionally, Deep adapts to continuous feedback while maintaining user engagement which adds another layer of complexity. | |
| **Technical Architecture**  The technical architecture of this project includes a front-end built with TypeScript, React.js, Vite, and SASS, creating a responsive user interface. The back end is developed using Go (Gin framework) with GORM for database handling, while the PostgreSQL database manages data storage. The architecture also supports both SQL and JSON querying, allowing for flexibility in handling and processing user data. | |
| **Strengths**   * Real-time Productivity Tools The ability to track tasks and visualise progress in real time boosts focus and productivity. * User Engagement The personalised analytics and study tools cater well to university students, helping them maintain attention and build efficient work habits.   **Weaknesses**   * Complexity in User Behaviour Tracking Understanding user focus and behaviour can be challenging and may require further research and testing. * Potential Performance Bottlenecks Real-time data processing and the need for frequent updates to the UI could create performance challenges, particularly as the user base grows. | |

This research provided useful insights that helped shape AGA's features and design. By examining the strengths and challenges of Carswell’s project, including his use of a real-time task tracker and customised tools to strengthen user engagement, AGA aims to create an effective, user-friendly design and a reliable system setup that is well-suited to the needs of individuals dealing with ADHD.

# 3. System Design

This chapter outlines the design of the proposed system, detailing the methodology, system architecture, and the key components necessary for implementation. It provides a structured blueprint for the development process of AGA.

## 3.1. Software Methodology

### Development Methodology

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The development methodology for this project primarily draws from the traditional Waterfall model, providing a structured and linear approach to project planning and implementation. However, elements of the Agile methodology are incorporated throughout the process to introduce flexibility and iterative development. | | Mastering the Waterfall Methodology: An In-Depth Look | Motion *Figure 3.1.A Waterfall Methodology* |
| The traditional Waterfall model establishes a clear sequence of phases - *requirements gathering, design, implementation, testing, deployment,* and *maintenance* - ensuring that all steps are well-documented providing a strong foundation for project management and ensures that key milestones are met in a structured manner. | | |
| What is the Agile Methodology in Software Development? | by Serena Gray |  Medium  *Figure 3.1.B Agile Methodology* | To complement this, an Agile approach is integrated, allowing the project to adapt to changes and continuously improve through *iterative cycles,* or *sprints*.  Each sprint includes planning, task allocation, execution, review, and adjustment phases. This iterative method allows a quick response to feedback, address issues as they arise, and enhance project quality progressively. | |
| *“Agile teams also believe in continuously evaluating project plans and objectives. As a result, they are highly flexible and can quickly adjust to change…Adopting the Agile method will allow you to operate in a detail-oriented manner.”* (Team, 2022) | | |
| By combining the detailed planning of the Waterfall model with the adaptability of Agile, this hybrid methodology ensures both a clear project direction and the ability to refine and enhance the project based continuous evaluations and user feedback. This approach helps maintain high-quality deliverables while meeting the dynamic needs of the project. | | |

A diagram of a process

Description automatically generated

*Figure 3.1.C Hybrid Waterfall and Agile Methodology*

*More information regarding task distribution in 6. Project Management (6.1 Project Plan).*

## 3.2. Overview of System

The system is designed with three primary components to ensure smooth operation and interaction: a *frontend UI*, a *backend server*, and a *database*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Frontend UI** | Allows users to input data through a web application. This interface is built using modern web technologies like Next.js, HTML, CSS and JS to ensure accessibility across multiple devices. |
| **Backend Server** | Processes the user inputs and facilitates communication between the frontend and the database. This is where the core functionality is executed. |
| **Database** | Stores user data, including tasks, mood logs, and preferences, and ensures real-time synchronisation across all components. |

In addition to AGA’s web application, where users can manage their tasks, mood logs, and other services, the physical bot product also requires the development of hardware components such as a *Raspberry Pi, camera, microphone*, and *display* to interact with users.

These hardware elements are integrated with the backend database to retrieve and store data. Python is used to handle interactions between the hardware and users, enabling features like focus detection, audio prompts, and task updates.

### System Architecture

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| MVC Architecture - Detailed Explanation - InterviewBit *Figure 3.2.A MVC Architecture* | | This project adopts the Model-View-Controller (MVC) architecture to ensure maintainability and scalability achieving a robust structure that supports efficient data handling, responsive UI, and a seamless user experience. |
| **Model** | The database (Firebase) serves as the model, managing user data, task lists, preferences, and other information in real-time. | |
| **View** | The user interface is built using Next.js framework, ensuring responsive interaction across devices. | |
| **Controller** | Next.js handles the server-side logic, API requests, and routing to connect the user interface with the underlying data and services, such as Google’s Weather API. | |

## 3.3. Requirement Analysis

### Use Case Diagrams

These diagrams help in identifying system requirements and ensuring that all user needs are addressed effectively.

In the context of this project, the term *user* refers primarily to individuals with ADHD, who are the main target audience for AGA’s features and functionalities. Secondary users, such as students and other individuals seeking tools for productivity and focus, are also considered.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Figure 3.3.A Use Case 1 Using AGA System*  *(UML2)* | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Use Case 1:** Using AGA System | | | **Goal** | User can use AGA’s tools. | | **Preconditions** | User requires a verified account. | | **Postconditions (Success)** | User can access AGA’s tools. | | **Postconditions**  **(Failed)** | User is unable to access AGA’s tools due to unverified account. | | **Actors** | Users (Individual with ADHD or Student) | | **Trigger** | User wants to use AGA’s system | | **Description** | User logins/create an account to use the tools AGA offers. | | **Priority** | High | | |
| **Main Flow (MF)** | | | | |
| **Step** | **Action** | | | **Alternate** |
| 1.1 | System prompts for user access details | | |  |
| 1.2 | User inputs their user details | | | EF.1.2 |
| 1.3 | System verifies user details are correct | | | EF.1.3 |
| 1.4 | System gives access to the user and directs to AGA’s base page | | |  |
| 1.5 | User accesses AGA’s tools on the web application | | | End of MF |
| **Exceptions or Error Flows** | | | | |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.2:** MF.1.2 User does not have an account | | | | |
| 1.1 | User registers an account | | | MF.1.1 |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.3:** MF.1.3 User input incorrect user access details | | | | |
| 1.1 | System prompts user of the error – *‘Incorrect email or password’* | | |  |
| 1.2 | User re-enters user access details | | | MF.1.3 |
| **Non-Functional Requirement** | | | | |
| **Adherence to Legal Principles** | | Ensures compliance with data protection and privacy laws such as GDPR. | | |
| **Regulation and Law** | | Users should meet the standard age to access the website. | | |
| **Data Minimisation** | | Collects only the minimum necessary data for functionalities. | | |
| **Purpose Limitation** | | Uses data solely for its stated purpose with transparency to users. | | |
| **Consent Management** | | Requires explicit user consent before data collection or sharing. | | |
| **Data Retention Policy** | | Retains data only as long as necessary for its intended purpose. | | |
| **Data Integrity** | | Maintains data accuracy, completeness, and reliability. | | |
| **Right to Erasure** | | Ensures compliance with data protection and privacy laws such as GDPR. | | |

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| *Figure 3.3.B Use Case 2 Focus Mode*  *(UML2)* | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Use Case 2:** Focus Mode | | | **Goal** | User completes a task | | **Preconditions** | AGA is set in front of User where their eyes are visible, and Focus Mode is enabled | | **Postconditions (Success)** | AGA can detect User’s concentration level and provide appropriate feedback | | **Postconditions**  **(Failed)** | AGA is unable to deliver its service due to system or hardware error | | **Actors** | User, AGA Bot | | **Trigger** | User wants to study/work therefore enabling Focus Mode | | **Description** | User sets AGA on Focus Mode to start studying/working. AGA enables its camera to detect and alert user accordingly to complete task. | | **Priority** | High | | |
| **Main Flow (MF)** | | | | |
| **Step** | **Action** | | | **Alternate** |
| 1.1 | User sets AGA in front of them and enables focus mode | | | EF.1.1 |
| 1.2 | AGA Bot alerts user they are detected | | |  |
| 1.3 | User starts task | | | EF.1.3 |
| 1.4 | User hyper fixates on task | | |  |
| 1.5 | AGA Bot turns blue and alerts user to take a break | | | AF.1.5 |
| 1.6 | User continuous to work on task and completes it | | | End of MF |
| **Exceptions or Error Flows** | | | | |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.1:** EF.1.1 AGA is unable to detect User | | | | |
| 1.1 | System prompts that it is unable to detect user | | |  |
| 1.2 | User re-positions AGA Bot | | | MF.1.1 |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.3:** EF.1.3 User loses focus on Task | | | | |
| 1.1 | AGA Bot turns red and alerts user to return to Task | | |  |
| 1.2 | User returns to the task | | |  |
| **Alternative Flows (AF)** | | | | |
| **Alternative Flow 1.3:** AF.1.5 User loses focus on Task | | | | |
| 1.1 | User takes a break | | |  |
| 1.2 | User returns to task | | | MF.1.6 |
| **Non-Functional Requirement** | | | | |
| **Camera Security and Usability Restrictions** | | Limits camera functionality to protect user safety and privacy. | | |

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| *Figure 3.3.C Use Case 3 Task Setter*  *(UML2)* | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Use Case 3:** Task Setter | | | **Goal** | User can add task and get a clear view of what to prioritise first | | **Preconditions** | User is logged into account | | **Postconditions (Success)** | Task is added onto scheduler ordered in high to low priority | | **Postconditions**  **(Failed)** | Task is not saved on scheduler | | **Actors** | User, DB, Web Application | | **Trigger** | User needs a reminder for a task | | **Description** | User adds a task on scheduler, adding the description, date, time and priority weight. | | **Priority** | High | | |
| **Main Flow (MF)** | | | | |
| **Step** | **Action** | | | **Alternate** |
| 1.1 | User creates a task adding description, date, time and weight priority | | |  |
| 1.2 | System checks double scheduling | | | EF.1.2 |
| 1.3 | System adds task in DB | | |  |
| 1.4 | System displays tasks in order of priority weight | | |  |
| 1.5 | User opens the days’ task lists to have a clear view of what to prioritise first | | | End of MF |
| **Exceptions or Error Flows** | | | | |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.2:** EF.1.2 Double Scheduling of Task | | | | |
| 1.1 | System prompts user there is a task scheduled during this time | | |  |
| 1.2 | User confirms | | |  |
| 1.3 | System blocks enough appropriate time for these tasks to be completed on calendar | | | AF.1.3 |
| 1.4 | System adds task and orders the tasks in high to low priority | | | MF.1.4 |
| **Alternative Flows (AF)** | | | | |
| **Alternative Flow 1.3:** AF.1.3 Not enough time to add new task | | | | |
| 1.1 | System prompts user it is unable to add task due to lack of time space | | |  |
| 1.2 | User updates time or date | | | MF.1.2 |
| **Non-Functional Requirement** | | | | |
| **Data Minimisation** | | Collects only the minimum necessary data for functionalities. | | |
| **Purpose Limitation** | | Uses data solely for its stated purpose with transparency to users. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Figure 3.3.D Use Case 4 Mood Log*  *(UML2)* | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Use Case 4:** Mood Log | | | **Goal** | Allow user to visually analyse the mental progression in a weekly or monthly basis. | | **Preconditions** | User is logged into account | | **Postconditions (Success)** | User logs mood activity and display logs into a visual graph | | **Postconditions**  **(Failed)** | Web App is unable to fetch logs from DB to produce a graph | | **Actors** | Actor, DB, Web App | | **Trigger** | User accesses account to check their mental progression | | **Description** | User is prompted to log mood activity, and a graph is displayed of weekly or monthly logs | | **Priority** | Mid | | |
| **Main Flow (MF)** | | | | |
| **Step** | **Action** | | | **Alternate** |
| 1.1 | User access AGA’s Web App | | |  |
| 1.2 | System prompts user to log mood activity | | | AF.1.2 |
| 1.3 | User logs mood | | |  |
| 1.4 | System saves logs into the database | | |  |
| 1.5 | System displays logs in a visual graph | | | EF.1.5 |
| 1.6 | User switches between weekly or monthly graphs | | | End of MF |
| **Exceptions or Error Flows** | | | | |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.5:** EF.1.5 Unable to fetch data from database | | | | |
| 1.1 | System displays an empty graph with an error message | | |  |
| 1.2 | User reports technical issue | | |  |
| 1.3 | Support service fixes the technical issue | | | MF.1.5 |
| **Alternative Flows (AF)** | | | | |
| **Alternative Flow 1.2:** | | | | |
| 1.1 | User cancels/exits the prompt | | |  |
| 1.2 | System sets a timer and asks again or next time user accesses the web app again | | | End of AF |
| **Non-Functional Requirement** | | | | |
| **Data Minimisation** | | Collects only the minimum necessary data for functionalities. | | |
| **Purpose Limitation** | | Uses data solely for its stated purpose with transparency to users. | | |
| **Consent Management** | | Requires explicit user consent before data collection or sharing. | | |
| **Data Retention Policy** | | Retains data only as long as necessary for its intended purpose. | | |
| *Figure 3.3.E Use Case 5 Weather API*  *(UML2)* | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Use Case 5:** Weather API | | | **Goal** | Identify what weather it is and prepare appropriately | | **Preconditions** | Connected to Weather API and JSON file for suggestions | | **Postconditions (Success)** | Web App/AGA Bot can suggest what user should prepare for the day | | **Postconditions**  **(Failed)** | Unable to read weather API/JSON file to provide suggestion | | **Actors** | User, Weather API, Web App/AGA Bot | | **Trigger** | User is looking for suggestions base on weather | | **Description** | User prompts system for weather suggestion, system checks weather, compares the findings to JSON file to provide appropriate suggestions | | **Priority** | Mid | | |
| **Main Flow (MF)** | | | | |
| **Step** | **Action** | | | **Alternate** |
| 1.1 | User accesses Web App | | |  |
| 1.2 | User prompts the Weather Tool | | |  |
| 1.3 | System checks user’s location | | | EF.1.3 |
| 1.4 | Weather API checks weather for that location | | | EF.1.4 |
| 1.5 | System reads JSON file based on weather findings | | |  |
| 1.6 | System suggests user appropriately | | | End of MF |
| **Exceptions or Error Flows** | | | | |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.3:** EF.1.3 User’s Location is disabled | | | | |
| 1.1 | System prompts user for location access permissions | | |  |
| 1.2 | User enables location on | | | MF.1.3 |
| **Exception/Error Flow 1.4:** EF.1.4 Weather API is not working | | | | |
| 1.1 | System prompts user that the Weather tool is facing a technical issue | | |  |
| 1.2 | System refreshes in the background | | | MF.1.2 |
| **Non-Functional Requirement** | | | | |
| Adherence to Legal Principles | | Ensures compliance with data protection and privacy laws such as GDPR. | | |
| Consent Management | | Requires explicit user consent before data collection or sharing. | | |
| Data Retention Policy | | Retains data only as long as necessary for its intended purpose. | | |
| Data Integrity | | Maintains data accuracy, completeness, and reliability. | | |

### Class Analysis

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.F Class Analysis Focus Mode*

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.G Class Analysis Task Setter*

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.H Class Analysis Mood Log*

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.I Class Analysis Weather API*

### Class and Sequence Diagram

#### Focus Mode

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated with medium confidence  
*Figure 3.3.J Informal Sequence Diagram Focus Mode*

*A screenshot of a computer program

Description automatically generated  
Figure 3.3.K Class Diagram Focus Mode*

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.L Formal Sequence Diagram Focus Mode*

#### Task Setter

A screenshot of a computer program

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.M Class Diagram Task Setter*

A diagram of a task

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.N Formal Sequence Diagram Task Setter*

### Database Diagram (ERD)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Figure 3.3.O Entity Relation Diagram* | Key System Relationships **Weather API to User (1 to 1)**  Weather suggestions provided by the Weather API are personalised for individual users, such as recommendations tailored to their location or preferences.  **User to Task (1 to Many)**  A single User can create multiple Tasks, but each Task is associated with only one User.  Users are responsible for creating and managing their own tasks, and this relationship ensures that tasks are directly associated with their creator.  **Task → Focus Mode to Task (1 to 0..1)**  Focus Mode functionality is tied to a specific task to monitor the user’s concentration during that task.  *\*However, Focus Mode can be used even if Task is not on Scheduler for Focus Detection Tool purposes.* |
| **Mood Log (1 to Many)**  A single User can have multiple Mood Log entries, but each Mood Log belongs to only one User.  Mood logs allow users to track and analyse their emotional state over time. Each entry is tied to the user who recorded it.  **Task to User**  Tasks include a foreign key UserID to link tasks to their creators.  This ensures that all tasks are associated with a valid user, maintaining the integrity and reliability of the database. | |

## 3.4. Project Design

### Web App and Bot Sitemap

A diagram of a software company

Description automatically generated with medium confidence  
*Figure 3.3.P Sitemap*

### Web App GUI Prototype

A screenshot of a blue square with green eyes and a green square with green text

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.1 Web App GUI Sign In/Up*

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.1 Web App GUI Landing Page*

A screenshot of a website

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.2 Web App GUI Landing Page: About*

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.3 Web App GUI Main Page: Tools*

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.4 Web App GUI Profile/Setting Page*

A screenshot of a website

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.5 Web App GUI Contact Us Page*

### AGA Bot GUI Prototype

A blue cube with a leaf on top

Description automatically generatedA cartoon of a plant

Description automatically generatedA blue cube with a leaf on top

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.6 AGA Bot Using 3D Model*

A cartoon of a plant

Description automatically generatedA blue square with a question mark and a leaf

Description automatically generatedA cartoon of a blue square with a green leaf on top

Description automatically generatedA blue square with a leaf on top

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 3.3.6 AGA Bot Expressions Using 3D Model*

# 4. Testing and Evaluation

A key part of this evaluation involves a questionnaire distributed to individuals with ADHD. This feedback provides valuable insights into their needs, preferences, and challenges, allowing the system to be refined to better support its users. Additionally, this section highlights the challenges encountered during the implementation of the project's prototype, particularly in developing the Focus Mode and AGA's interface.

By evaluating what works effectively and identifying areas for improvement, this section provides a roadmap for refining the prototype and ensuring the final product meets user needs and expectations.

## 4.1. Understanding Users Needs

### Questionnaire Form

|  |
| --- |
| ADHD and Daily Life Questionnaire |
|  |
| **Understanding ADHD and Daily Challenges** |
| In your own words, how would you describe ADHD and how it affects you personally? |
| What obstacles or challenges do you experience daily due to ADHD? |
| How do you typically overcome these obstacles or manage them? |
| **Current Tools and Resources** |
| What applications or activities do you currently use to help manage your daily routine? |
| What do you like most about the current services or tools you use? |
| What do you dislike about these services or tools? |
| **Desired Features** |
| What features are you looking for in apps or tools designed to support ADHD?   * Which features have been most helpful for you? * Which features have not worked or been effective for you? |
| **Proposed Solution** |
| Would you find a keychain device that consistently reminds you of your tasks and monitors your study/work progress helpful in managing ADHD? Why or why not? |

### Results of Questionnaire

|  |
| --- |
| ADHD and Daily Life Questionnaire |
|  |
| **Understanding ADHD and Daily Challenges** |
| In your own words, how would you describe ADHD and how it affects you personally?   1. For me it's a combination of inability to focus and issues with executive functioning. I also believe hyperactivity is one too though I think I lean on the inattentive side I do fidget a lot. 2. It is an inability to keep to a routine, a lack of motivation, and an inability to focus. I run out of time for everything I want to do, even just for living. 3. It's the reason it takes me three times as long as everyone else to do something, and the reason I have to work much harder than everyone else to get to the same level of skill as everyone else. 4. ADHD feels like a changing puzzle. The puzzle keeps changing so its hard to complete it. This is how it feels like it my life, where I think I know what I need to do and suddenly, my entirety wants to do something else. Its hard to be consistent. |
| What obstacles or challenges do you experience daily due to ADHD?   1. The biggest obstacles I face are taking care of myself so hygiene, remembering to brush my teeth hair, and managing to remember tasks I must do, finding motivation to do this tasks, and organizing and cleaning. Another one since I am a student is focusing in long lectures. I can't keep my attention no matter how hard I try sometimes. And the biggest one when it comes to homework is being able to start the assignment. 2. I can't get organized or complete necessary tasks in a very timely way. It sucks. 3. Getting started. Lately, I just seem to zone out for a long time until getting started becomes an emergency. That, and sleeping. I can't keep a sleep schedule to save my life. 4. I cant meet my deadlines unless there is pressure which also affects the quality of my performances on these tasks. I jump into different tasks due to the overwhelming tasks adding into my list unexpectedly which sometimes paralyses me into doing these tasks. I stress the same in different types of tasks even if its not important and do these over what is important as I don’t distinguish them properly. |
| How do you typically overcome these obstacles or manage them?   1. The best things that work for me are external motivators. Like if someone's coming over or I make this promise to someone I will do it and they hold me accountable. I'm still figuring it out how to navigate this though. I also always try to set reminders on my phone to send me a notification if I need to remember something like an appointment. Another useful thing I've found for homework and studying is working at a time I'm least tired and in a quiet study room by myself with minimal noise and distractions. And access to snacks and water too so I don't get distracted and leave to find food. 2. I got medicated which helps a lot. I became better able to use a planner and reminders once I knew why I was struggling so much 3. I'm pretty old now, so I've just kinda learned how to tell what's going on, and then I talk myself through it. That, and fear. When I get to the point where something is now urgent, and hence fear inducing, I am good, and I can get moving. 4. I meditate – breathing exercise, etc. I write down what I need to do so I don’t have to keep them constantly ticking in my head. |
| **Current Tools and Resources** |
| What applications or activities do you currently use to help manage your daily routine?   1. I don't know if I have much other than using reminders on my phone as of right now. I also have used todo lists and schedules to time when my classes are. But I do forget them a lot. 2. I use several digital calendars to keep track of my reminders because I can ask siri to create a calendar event really quickly (apple calender), use my outlook app to autocreate events when I read the email that the details come in, Use google calendar to see when my job has scheduled me (I just have a babysitting gig that the parent gives me a google calendar schedule)   I use onenote to keep a list that can be accessed on both my laptop and my phone. Its essential that I be able to add things when I think of them.  I use waterllama to remind me to drink water.   1. GDT, Freedom App, Kanbans, calenders, whiteboards, and lots of excercise. 2. Ive tried mamy different apps, mostly schedulers, lists, reminder types of apps. Unfortunately, I forget about them and never actually use them. |
| What do you like most about the current services or tools you use?   1. In terms of reminders on my phone I like that it'll notify me at that time and is pretty simple. 2. N/A 3. N/A 4. For example, I use the reminders app of iOS on my watch. It has time and date setters which I put on repetition, and I am reminded of the task on a weekly basis. |
| What do you dislike about these services or tools?   1. What I don't like is sometimes the effort to do it feels difficult for whatever reason. Or if my phone bugs and never sends a notification. 2. I dislike how I can't easily consolidate the calendars into one. Onenote requires a subscription to use. Waterllama is fine design-wise but I forget to use it. 3. They don't really work all the time, and I have to pay for them. 4. It requires so much effort to set up which then demotivates me as Ive already invested so much mental strength preparing it. |
| **Desired Features** |
| What features are you looking for in apps or tools designed to support ADHD?  *Which features have been most helpful for you? Which features have not worked or been effective for you?*   1. I don't use many applications. I genuinely have motivation at the start but then I forgot about them usually. I feel like maybe those apps I see online like ones that gamify tasks could be cool? I haven't used them in a while but my forgetfulness to use it is tricky. Maybe something cool could be things to really customize experiences. Like if I could put my own drawing or pictures as a theme or icon or something, it might make it more exciting. Or if they added funny things to it like funny sound effects you can add to make the app more entertaining. Funny messages maybe. 2. I love having widgets that I am forced to see when I scroll past them. 3. Freedom because it locks me out of distractions. It does'nt always work anymore though, because I spent like three days once figuring out how to unlock it and defeat it. Whiteboards are the biggest help for me. 4. I want a product that is hard to miss, forget. Maybe a reward system? Something that will help my inconsistency. |
| **Proposed Solution** |
| Would you find a keychain device that consistently reminds you of your tasks and monitors your study/work progress helpful in managing ADHD? Why or why not?   1. For me I don't. I've tried before but sometimes I just forgot why it's there or I'll procrastinate on it so much and then the keychain will blend in and I forgot. This happens with notifications too if I set one for every day it blends in and my brain tunes it out unfortunately. So they generally need to be novel and different each time for it to work. 2. Nope, I don't use my car everyday and am not likely to see it in a timely manner. I also frequently lose my keys because I only think about them when I need them. I don't even notice the keychains I have on my keys right now. 3. Probably not. I have a phone that can do that, and I ignore it most of the time anyway, until whatever it is becomes an emergency. 4. Yes and no, I may use it a lot at the start but just like my apple watch, there are days I forget about it for weeks on end |

### Findings

Referencing the questionnaire, it was evident that while individuals with ADHD appreciate tools designed to assist them, many existing solutions fail to address the core issues of forgetfulness, demotivation, and inconsistency. Features customisation and high visibility are in demand, while tools that are repetitive, complex, or require high mental effort are often abandoned.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Understanding ADHD and Daily Challenges** | **ADHD Characteristics**  ADHD is often characterised by difficulty focusing, challenges with executive functioning, hyperactivity, and inconsistency in routines. Individuals frequently feel overwhelmed by tasks as their attention and focus shift constantly, resulting in frustration and inefficiency. Metaphors such as a "*changing puzzle*" capture the internal struggle, reflecting the unpredictability of focus and motivation experienced by those with ADHD.  **Common Challenges**  Individuals with ADHD often face significant challenges in initiating tasks, particularly in the absence of external pressure or deadlines. Difficulties with organisation, time management, and maintaining routines are common, leading to high levels of procrastination, zoning out, and unexpectedly switching between tasks. Overwhelming task lists can become paralysing, causing individuals to focus on less important tasks while neglecting those that are more urgent.  **Methods of Coping**  External motivators, such as accountability partners or reminders, can be instrumental in helping individuals with ADHD stay on track. Techniques like writing down tasks, practising meditation, and using breathing exercises are often effective for self-regulation. Additionally, digital tools such as planners, calendars, and notifications provide valuable support in remembering tasks, although their effectiveness can vary depending on individual needs and preferences. |
| **Current Tools and Resources** | The individuals often rely on a combination of tools to manage their tasks and routines, including phone reminders, digital calendars such as Apple or Google, and task management apps.  Additionally, some individuals use specialised apps, such as Freedom to block distractions and Waterllama to encourage hydration.  **Positive Notes**   * Simple notifications and reminders were seen as effective for staying on top of tasks. * Repetitive or consistent alerts are useful. * Integration across multiple devices, such as phones and laptops, made tools easier to use.   **Negative Notes**   * Discouragement on tools that require significant effort to set up. * Notifications and reminders often become repetitive or easy to ignore over time, reducing impact. * Some apps require subscriptions or payments, which can be off-putting. |
| **Desired Features** | **What Users Wants:**   * **High visibility**   Features such as widgets or unavoidable reminders to increase accountability.   * **Customisation**   The ability to personalise apps, such as adding personal icons, images, or themes, to make them more appealing.   * **Physical presence**   A product that is hard to forget or miss, such as a device always in sight, to ensure consistency.   * **Reward systems**   Features that encourage progress by offering small, tangible incentives.  **Avoid:**   * Overly complex setups that require significant effort to maintain. * Tools or apps that don't adapt to a user's forgetfulness or inconsistency. * Standard notifications or alerts that become repetitive and blend into the background. |
| **Proposed Solution (Keychain Device (AGA Bot))** | The individuals expressed mixed reactions towards the idea of a keychain device, highlighting several concerns.  Common issues included the tendency to forget or lose keys, making the device less reliable. Others worried that a keychain might blend into their environment and eventually be ignored. Others also expressed a preference for tools integrated into their phones or existing devices, as these are already part of their daily habits and more convenient to access.  **Alternative Preferences:**   * Some suggested that such a device would only work if it has a way to avoid being ignored. * Suggestions included creating a highly visible, non-intrusive alternative that would encourage consistent use without overwhelming the user. |

## 4.2. Prototype Testing

### Challenges

Developing AGA's prototype, particularly the Focus Mode and its interface, posed several challenges. These obstacles primarily arose from selecting suitable libraries and methodologies to implement the required features effectively, combined with my limited experience in this area.

These challenges underscored the need for thorough research and adaptability during the implementation phase. By leveraging online resources, datasets, and tutorials, I was able to somewhat overcome these obstacles and progress toward developing AGA.

#### Focus Mode: Detecting User Concentration

**Challenge**Initially, I lacked confidence in selecting appropriate libraries or understanding how to detect a user's concentration due to having no expertise in this area. The goal was to monitor the user's focus by tracking their eye movements and ensuring they are oriented toward the task by also detecting the location of their ears.

**Solution**   
I discovered a relevant dataset on Kaggle and tutorials that provided step-by-step guidance on implementing eye-tracking and facial orientation detection. This allowed me to prototype the feature more effectively and gain a clearer direction for implementation.

#### AGA Bot: Facial Expressions for User Engagement

**Challenge**Another significant challenge I faced was implementing dynamic facial expressions on the bot to improve user experience and create a sense of connection between the product and user. Initially, I struggled to find resources or libraries that could help me create and integrate facial expressions.

**Solution**   
I identified a few potential libraries for facial expression rendering but found that many lacked the specific features I needed. I am exploring options to either use existing libraries or, if necessary, draw and program the expressions from scratch to ensure they align with the bot’s functionality.

### Focus Mode Testing Plan 01

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Testing Plan 01** | | Focus Mode Feature | |
| **Objective**  To evaluate the functionality and effectiveness of the Focus Mode feature, ensuring it accurately detects user focus, alerts for loss of concentration, and provides break recommendations after extended focus. | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Testing Scenarios** | | | |
| **1** | Focus Detection | | |
| **Test Case** | | | Verify that the bot accurately detects the user's eyes and ears while in Focus Mode. |
| **Expected Outcome** | | | The bot successfully identifies the user’s presence and confirms they are working/studying. (*Turn Green)* |
| **2** | Loss of Focus Detection | | |
| **Test Case** | | | Scenario where the user looks away or remains still for an extended period. |
| **Expected Outcome** | | | The bot detects the loss of focus and turns red to alert the user. |
| **3** | Break Recommendation | | |
| **Test Case** | | | Users remain focused for 30 minutes or more. |
| **Expected Outcome** | | | The bot recommends a break by turning blue and displaying “*break”.* |
| **4** | Environmental Challenges | | |
| **Test Case** | | | Evaluate the bot’s focus detection in different lighting conditions and with potential distractions in the background. |
| **Expected Outcome** | | | The bot consistently identifies focus or loss of focus, regardless of environmental factors. |

### Bot Facial Expressions Testing Plan 02

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Testing Plan 02** | | Bot Facial Expressions Feature | |
| **Objective**  To assess the implementation of facial expressions on the bot, ensuring they improve user engagement and enhance the overall experience when interacting with the bot. | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Testing Scenarios** | | | |
| **1** | Appropriate expressions on different cases | | |
| **Test Case** | | | Show that for each case, expression is showed as listed:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Happy Expression** | Task completed | | **Neutral Expression** | Idle state or waiting for input | | **Sad Expression** | Error | | **Excited Expression** | Encouragement during focus mode | |

# 5. Prototype Development

In this section, I will present code snippets developed during the interim phase, highlighting key functionalities and progress made in the implementation of AGA.

## 5.1. Focus Mode

Focus Mode is main feature of AGA, designed to help users achieve a balance between their responsibilities and overall well-being. This feature aims to keep users focused on their tasks while also providing gentle reminders to take breaks when they become hyper fixated. This is essential for promoting better wellness management.

The main components of this feature include the ability to detect the user, determine their focus level, and respond appropriately when the user loses focus or becomes hyper focused.

### Face Detection

This code implements a Face Detection system using dlib and OpenCV to monitor a user’s facial movements and concentration. It detects key facial features, such as the eyes and head position, to assess whether the user is focused or distracted. By calculating the *Eye Aspect Ratio* (EAR) and tracking head stability, the system determines if the user is looking at the screen and if their face and body are stable. Based on this information, the system adjusts a bot's expression to indicate whether the user is focused or distracted.

A computer screen with white text

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 5.1.A Calculating EAR*

This section of the code is responsible for detecting whether the user is looking at the screen by calculating the EAR for both eyes – it measures the ratio between certain distances on the eye and is used to detect eye openness. If the avg\_ear is below the threshold, which suggests the user might be blinking or distracted, the *eye\_frame\_count* is incremented to track how long the user has been distracted. This process helps the system assess the user's attention and adjust the bot’s expressions accordingly.

A screen shot of a computer

Description automatically generated  
*Figure 5.1.B Calculating Stability*

The code monitors whether the position of the face or head has shifted significantly between consecutive frames. If either moves beyond the threshold, it is considered unstable, and the frame count for stability is reset. This check ensures that the system can differentiate between intentional movements

A black background with white text

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*Figure 5.1.C Updating Last Positions of Individual*

This part ensures that the system can track continuous changes in face and head position over time. Each frame’s result depends on the previous frame’s face/head position, creating a continuous assessment of user stability.

A black screen with white text

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*Figure 5.1.D Determine User’s Focus Level (Concentrated/Stable or Distracted)*

*A computer code with white text

Description automatically generated  
Figure 5.1.E Provides Feedback to the user using Bot Expressions*

This logic helps ensure that the system accurately detects user focus and provides feedback, such as alerting the user to refocus when instability or distraction is detected. In *Figure 5.1.E,* it sets the bot to show an alert if it detects the user is either distracted - *based on eye movement* - or their body/facial position is unstable. This is a way to encourage the user to refocus or remain stable.

## 5.2 AGA’s Facial Expressions

The primary objective of implementing facial expressions on AGA is to enhance user experience by creating a sense of connection and companionship. By creating a bond between the user and the bot, it encourages users to feel more comfortable and open when interacting with AGA.

This openness is important, as it ensures users are more likely to keep AGA nearby and consider the suggestions it provides, therefore, improving its effectiveness in supporting their productivity and well-being.

### Expressions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Happy** | Task completed or triggered every N minute | | **Neutral** | Idle state or waiting for input | | **Alert** | When User loses focus, it prompts an alert face | | **Break** | When User is in focus for N minutes, it prompts a message for break | | A group of white paper with writing on it  Description automatically generated *Figure 5.2.A Face Expressions Prototype* | |
| A black screen with white text  Description automatically generated *Figure 5.2.B Neutral Expression of AGA (Base Face)*  A computer screen with text  Description automatically generated *Figure 5.2.C Building the Happy Expression of AGA*  A black background with white text  Description automatically generated *Figure 5.2.E Building Attitude Expression of AGA*  A computer screen shot of text  Description automatically generated *Figure 5.2.B Building Break Expression of AGA* | | *Figure 5.2.D Building Alert Expression of AGA* |

The variety of expressions, from happy to alert, allows AGA to offer real-time feedback that adapts to the focus state, enhancing its role as an interactive and responsive companion.

# 6. Project Management

This section of the report provides an overview of the project management approach utilised for this project. It covers the *project plan - milestone roadmap, development methodology and task distribution methods - supervisor and team engagement strategies,* as well as *risk management practices*.

Each component is discussed to highlight how structured planning, communication, and proactive risk mitigation were applied to achieve project objectives effectively.

## 6.1. Project Plan

### Milestones & Roadmap

The project plan is divided into four quarters, with each semester consisting of two quarters. The first semester focuses on completing the development of the product, while the second semester is dedicated to the refinement of the product.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

*Figure 6.1.1.A Milestones First Semester*



*Figure 6.1.1.B Milestones Second Semester*

The project roadmap is automatically generated in GitHub when creating iterations. By setting up these iterations, GitHub organises the tasks, deadlines, and progress into a clear, visual roadmap. This automated roadmap provides an overview of the project's timeline, making it easy to track each phase’s progress and ensuring that the project stays aligned with its planned schedule.

*Find the roadmap on AGA’s Project at https://github.com/users/vedez/projects/2.*

### Task Distribution

Tasks are organised by priority and distributed across the following stages to maintain a streamlined workflow.

*Find the backlog of tasks on AGA’s Project at https://github.com/users/vedez/projects/2/views/1.*

* **To Do**

This stage includes all pending tasks, organised by labels such as *Stories, Tasks, and Bugs*. Each item represents a possible issue or feature for the project.

Uncompleted tasks stay in the backlog until allocated catch-up time.

* **In Progress**

Tasks are tackled one at a time to help maintain focus and prevent overwhelming scenarios. Stories are broken down into manageable tasks, which are completed individually to maintain a clear path from "to do" to "done."

* **Review & Testing**

Completed features are submitted in a different branch, where they undergo review and testing. Once a feature meets standards, it is merged into the main project branch, reducing bugs and maintaining quality.

* **Done**

Tasks are marked as "done" once they meet all requirements and quality standards. In this project, the definition of "done" means that the feature fulfils all specified requirements and has little to no bugs. Minor bugs that do not significantly impact the project can be logged as separate bug tasks to be addressed during review or allocated catch-up time.

## 6.2. Supervisor Engagement

Dr. Bojan Božić is an Assistant Lecturer in Computer Science at TU Dublin with extensive expertise in Semantic Web, Machine Learning, and Data Science. He will be supervising the development of my fourth-year project, *AGA*.

*More information could be found at* [*https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/faculties-and-schools/computing-digital-data/school-of-computer-science/people/academic-staff/bojanbozic.php*](https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/faculties-and-schools/computing-digital-data/school-of-computer-science/people/academic-staff/bojanbozic.php)*.*

### Meeting Availability

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tuesday | 14:00 – 15:00 |
| Wednesday | 11:00 – 15:00 |
| Thursday | 11:00 – 15:00 |

#### Types of Meeting

* **Catch Up**
  + A quick catch-up meeting regarding what has been completed during the week. This could either be delivered via on-site/online meeting or re-cap document sent via email.
  + Time duration: 15 minutes max.
* **Review**
  + This meeting reviews bigger accomplishments - *features, testing, etc… -* to discuss about what has been completed, possible changes to apply, and general feedback of these tasks.
  + Time duration: 30 minutes max.
* **Retrospective**
  + This meeting opens feedback regarding communication and the handling of the project if any aspects need to be changed or continued. This is important to ensure morale and strengthens communication of the team.

## 6.3. Risk Management

### Technical Risks

* **Software Bugs and Errors**

Mitigated through regular testing and continuous review of the issue board. Non-functioning features should be flagged immediately and either fixed within the current iteration or added to the backlog for scheduled review and correction.

* **Version Control**

Use branches to manage different versions of the code, merging only after code has passed review to reduce bugs in the main project. Labelling “done” in the definition stated in *6.1.3 Task Distribution.*

* **Security and Authorisation**

Implement Object-Oriented Programming (OOP) principles and assign appropriate authorisation levels to ensure secure, manageable code.

### User Risks

* **User Satisfaction and UX Failures**

Addressed through dedicated UX testing cases that prioritise user feedback to enhance usability. This is the top priority during the second semester for code implementation.

* **User Communication**

Engaging with users to understand their needs is essential, focusing on features that benefit their experience and usability of the application.

### Project Management

* **Time Constraints**

Each task or story is estimated for time, with allowances for unexpected delays by incorporating buffer time into the schedule.

* **Scope Creep**

Clearly define the project scope, prioritising core features. Additional requests or features are added to the backlog to address only if time allows, ensuring focus and avoiding overloading tasks.

* **Freeze Point**

Establish a *"freeze point"* where no new features or changes can be added, solidifying the final scope for efficient completion.

### Legal and Regulatory Risks

* **Data Privacy Compliance**

Ensure all user data handling complies with GDPR and other relevant data privacy laws.

* **Age Restrictions and Safety**

Consider age restrictions, ensuring that the product is safe and accessible for younger audiences. Additional laws regarding online safety and accessibility may also be reviewed.

### Steps for Effective Risk Management

1. **Risk Identification**: List potential risks across technical, user, project management, and regulatory areas.
2. **Risk Assessment**: Evaluate the likelihood and impact of each risk.
3. **Risk Prioritisation**: Prioritise high-risk items that have both high likelihood and high impact.
4. **Mitigation Planning**: Develop strategies to manage risks, such as additional testing phases.

## 6.4. Project Plan for Next Phase

As the interim phase ends, I now have a clearer understanding of the priorities and focus areas required for the next stage of development. The upcoming phase will involve a significant push to implement the core framework of the project, ensuring that production aligns with the initial project plan drafted earlier in the year.

During winter break, the primary goal will be to complete the implementation phase for key features such as the Task Setter, Mood Log, and Weather API, integrating these functionalities into the web application. Additionally, I will be constructing the physical AGA product, assembling the hardware components scheduled to arrive during this timeframe.

This stage is crucial for laying the groundwork for both the web application and the bot, with the focus for the next year on refining the project to enhance user experience.

## Plans and Future Work (Future Scope)

The next phase of the project focuses on completing the technical implementation and integrating all features into a cohesive system. The goal is to complete the implementation phase of both the web application and the bot by the end of 2024 which allows next year’s focus on refining the project through code and project review and usability testing.

The following steps outline the future scope for the end of the year:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature Completion and Integration** | **Finalise implementation for:**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Focus Mode  Task Setter  Profile Authentication | Mood Log  Weather API |   Integrate these features into a fully functional web application that connects the front end, back-end, and database systems. |
| **Web Application Development** | * Develop the web application UI, ensuring all features are connected. * Develop the front end and back-end systems to support real-time functionality and data synchronisation. |
| **Building AGA (Bot)** | * Assemble AGA with specific ordered hardware components - *Raspberry Pi, sensors, display and others.* * Connect the bot to the database, enabling it to interact with users and features such as Focus Mode directly through the hardware. |

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