MHCI: Storyboarding Lab

Yellow refers to advice for online attendees

Cyan refers to advice for in-person attendees

1. Overview and Pre-requisites

In this lab exercise, we're going to quickly go through the storyboarding experience, specifically exploring concepts related to your MHCI group project (a health and exercise related mobile interactive experience).

Today, you will individually create and peer review an app definition statement and a storyboard informed by your group project discussions thus far. This will help you when you meet again with your group, by providing a diverse range of perspectives on the design concepts you discussed in the previous lab.

To start this lab exercise, you should…

1.1. Have Initial Project Requirements and a Concept

In the previous lab session, you should have met with your coursework groups and discussed the requirements of your project, and have begun to generate concept ideas relating to the project brief.

A concept can describe an idea, application, experience, activity or interaction relating to the assessed exercise scenario of mobility + health and exercise.

You should come to today's lab with one or two concepts in mind based on the requirements you discussed in the previous lab, as we will be using storyboarding to further explore these.

1.2. View the Unit 3 Prototyping Slides/Video

We strongly recommend going through the Unit 3 prototyping slides or video on moodle before coming to this lab, as this introduces information you will find useful about the prototyping process e.g., app definition statements, the aims behind storyboarding etc.

1.3. (Optional, in-person) Bring some pens / pencils for storyboarding

2. Today's Lab

Each step has recommended timings, and we'll shout out some reminders to keep everyone on track as well.

2.1. App definition statement (10 mins)

First, you're going to come up with an **app definition statement** for your concept:

1. Identify your **users**: who are they, what are their values, what will motivate them to use your app, etc?
2. Identify/expand upon the **features** and **requirements**: brainstorm at this stage – the goal is to make the 'design funnel' as wide as possible at the start!
    1. Make sure that the requirements are informed by the project design brief! *Think: mobility paired with new and emerging consumer technology.*
3. Start **filtering** the feature list: what are the most important features that will help your users accomplish their goals through your app?
4. Now write the app definition statement: be concrete and clear!

This should be a maximum of a few sentences, focused on core purpose and features, and the experience you want your users to have.

2.2. App definition statement peer review (10 mins)

Next we'll use peer review, so you can get feedback on your own statement and review other peoples' statements too.

If attending in person: Show your app definition statement to those seated next to you. Ask them if they understand what it means, how clear it is, who they think the users are, what they think the main requirements might be. Read or listen to their statements, and provide feedback in turn.

If attending remotely: Type your app definition statement into Padlet, and rate/comment on other statements: https://padlet.com/markmcgill/30afd28xy5n1h812 - if Padlet doesn't work for whatever reason, post in your Lab Group channels instead.

Remember that peer review should be constructive and friendly, specifically:

- Be specific and clear about your concerns;
- Don't make personal or abusive statements; don't attack or insult;
- Emphasize what you like too;
- Provide ideas for improvements;

- Remember that no one is necessarily "wrong" – opinions and ideas can contribute to a broader understanding of your concept, and this is peer review with a small sample size, so take comments with a pinch of salt.

Some criteria to consider when reading the statements:

- Do you understand the statement? Does it communicate the goals of the concept, and the intended user experience? Can you imagine how the user might interact with it?
- Is the concept exciting, interesting, impactful, necessary?
- Is it clear who the users are, and what their key requirements are?

2.3. Storyboarding (15 mins)

Now let's sketch out a storyboard for your concept. Storyboarding is an interaction design technique based around user stories, which focus on interaction at a higher level. Storyboards can help illustrate and explore aspects of the app definition statement, and help designers empathise with users, identifying interaction needs. For example, a storyboard might consider:

- **Who the users are** – their needs, emotions etc
    - Personas can help here. You should have a persona from the app definition statement that you can focus on. Imagine yourself as that user and imagine how you would react in your usage scenario, what you would do, how you would feel?
- **The mobile context / scene, the circumstances of the user**
    - Where are they, where are they going, what kind of environment are they in, what challenges does that environment pose? Are they encumbered or distracted?
- How a concept fits into the user's lifestyle, and affects their actions, feelings etc.
- The **sequence of events / steps / narrative** occurring for a given concept

    Think about the events and problems the user is likely to experience, and then what solutions might emerge over the course of the story. How does your concept contribute to that story? What happens before / during / after an interaction?

Some tips:

- Don't worry if you're not an artist – storyboards don't have to be aesthetically pleasing, they are a tool intended to help you illustrate and explore your usage scenario.
- Focus on interactions in particular – we don't really care about the logistics of logins, account management etc. or technical feasibility at this stage.

If attending in person: There will be print-outs of the storyboard available at the front of the lab.

If attending remotely: Use the storyboard template available on moodle, and either print it out and sketch, or use your favourite digital sketching tool.

2.4. Peer review of storyboards (15 mins)

- **If attending in person**: Again, show your storyboard to those seated next to you.
- **If attending remotely**: Upload your storyboard to padlet (e.g., take a picture if drawn on paper or a screenshot if drawn digitally), and rate/comment on other storyboards: https://padlet.com/markmcgill/7z17bqmaaybms4j4 - if Padlet doesn't work for whatever reason, post in your Lab Group channels instead.

Some criteria to consider:

- Does the concept illustrated in the storyboard look viable?
- Do the problems encountered by the user meet your own experience or expectations of the usage context?
    - Were you able to empathise with the user? Could you understand how mobile technology might be able to help them?
- Do the proposed solutions or interactions seem appropriate to the context?
    - Consider mobility, physical exertion, cognitive/attentional demand, general workload, usability etc. Imagine that you are in that scenario and ask yourself what you would hypothetically like/dislike.
- What improvements might you make if you were to iterate on this concept?

3. At the end if you have time / after the lab

3.1. Collate and save your feedback

This exercise should hopefully have given you some useful peer feedback on concepts related to your group project. Gather than feedback up and save it alongside your definition statement and storyboard – these materials will be useful when you next meet with your project group.

3.2. Start prototyping your concepts e.g. using Figma

We won't be covering prototyping tools today, although many of you will already have experience using Figma (e.g. from Interactive Systems). We recommend that in your own time after the lab, you try prototyping your storyboard concept (e.g., prototype the user interface layout, prototype the core interactions). Some tips to help you get started:

1) Setup a Figma student account (and optionally create a Figma Team for your coursework group) https://youtu.be/dl0RlM_BNIY
2) Learn the basics (Figma Youtube Channel) of...
    a. using the Editor https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSrbwCrEIII
    b. interactive prototyping, transitions, linked views https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d6zNGeF59M + https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5qiBwqptek
3) Consider what templates are most appropriate for your scenario or concept.
    a. Figma has a number of design kits or templates appropriate for different devices and UIs that could speed up your prototyping, for example:

i. Mixed Reality Toolkit UI https://www.figma.com/community/file/1002678624454538477
ii. Smartwatches https://www.figma.com/community/file/941948673051488891
iii. Mobile UI kit https://www.figma.com/templates/mobile-ui-kit/

3.3. Explore other prototyping tools

Consider also whether other tools would be more suited to your particular scenario e.g.:

- **Paper prototyping** - There are infinite smartphone/smartwatch paper templates online, but did you know you can also use paper prototyping for AR/VR too? For example, see these sketch sheets:
  - https://blog.prototypr.io/vr-sketch-sheets-4843fd690c91 for VR/AR storyboarding
  - https://blog.prototypr.io/vr-paper-prototyping-9e1cab6a75f3 for 360 photospheres
- **Digital prototyping** - See moodle for more details here, but key apps include:
  - Adobe XD
  - Balsamiq
  - Figma
  - InVision
  - Miro