DASU20 Reflection retake

Starting point and expectations

Data has played an important role in my previous, bachelor education ICT and Media Design. Especially because I am gravitating towards user experience design, it is important to understand the target group well. During my study at Fontys, I learned more about the users by using qualitative data that was collected through surveys and by conducting interviews.

Since starting my study at the university, I have seen that quantitative data can also be very powerful to gain extra insights in the behaviour of people, usage of products, performance of products, etcetera. That is why when starting this course, I was mostly interested in learning how to analyse and use quantitative data to create a concept that suits the target group's needs and wishes.

Activities during the course

Data on itself is not information. Only after analysing and giving meaning to this data, conclusions can be drawn, and concepts based on the data can be created. This is what I did in the course Data Acquisition and Visualization through Embodied Sensors. I improved my skills to use data in a meaningful way by analysing the provided data, enriching this by using relevant, additional data from other resources, and by using the obtained information to create a concept that suits the target group. This course also reminded me on how sensitive data can be and how important it is to therefore pay close attention to ethics and privacy.

The first step in the process of creating a concept was understanding the data and transforming this into something that gives valuable information. Once we learned that the person that provided us with the data for this course, is a member of a running group, we expanded the existing data with supplementary data from the website of this group. This way, we were able to make a distinction between what was most likely an individual run, and what was most likely a social run. Especially in our assignment, in which we chose to focus on social runners, it was important to gain insights on what the influence of the group was on the performance of the runner.

When combining the data, it was important to make conscious and substantiated decisions, as we were making assumptions on what is an individual or social run. Otherwise, mistakes could be made when interpreting the data. We did this as carefully as possible by checking multiple parameters such as date, location and type of run. At this stage of analysing and combining the data, I learned a lot from working with my group members and seeing how they approached the analysis process.

Results, reflection and learning opportunities

By following the lectures and by researching the target group, we found that the main interest of social runners most likely doesn't lie with statistics on their performance. Instead, their performance will presumably increase the most when running with others. This is why we created our concept MatchRun. An app in which we connect runners, rather than providing the user with statistics.

I find that our group has worked well together as everyone has contributed to the process and end result. I have mostly learned how to apply knowledge I already had on the subject by working with my group, to analyse a large dataset, in order to create a concept for a specific target group. I do think there were possibilities to dive into the data deeper and create a more elaborate concept.

Next time, I would use the opportunity to use the available data within the concept more. By this I mean that the app could use the data without showing the statistics to the user. This can be done, for example, by measuring the results of the user. Not to show this progress in the form of statistics to the user, but to give the runner personal feedback suitable to their performance. Or to be able to assign a 'level' to the user and create a personal schedule that also fits the person they are linked to.

I will certainly use qualitative and quantitative data in future projects. In this course, I found that the focus was on analysing and using the data, and less on retrieving data using sensors for example. It is therefore important that in the future, I will also learn how to actually collect the data, which is something I see as an opportunity for upcoming projects.