Interaction Design Master Assignment

How to develop the EatMyRide app in a user-centred approach?

UT Supervisor: Dr Armağan Karahanoğlu, Interaction Design Research Group, Enschede.

www.armagank.com

Company Supervisors: Hans Nuijt and Joram Kolf, EatMyRide, Utrecht.

www.eatmyride.com

For details of this collaboration: https://armagank.com/research/workshop-with-emr/

Background of the Master Assignment

This user-centred interaction design master's assignment focuses on designing a system to get feedback from the users of EatMyRide. It is a Netherlands based sports nutrition tracking app, which helps cyclists create nutrition plans that are fully personalized and customizable based on cyclists' fitness level and abilities. Cyclists' abilities are automatically analysed based on the performance in their previous bike rides. The app also offers integrations with route planners, so that cyclists can directly create a matching nutrition plan for the route cyclist plan. The app can be connected to various digital platforms and watches (e.g. Strava, Garmin and such) through which the cyclists can upload their food plans for their cycling training or races. Currently, the app has reached thousands of worldwide users.

Current situation

To develop the app in a user-centred way, the company talked to many riders so that they get a better idea of what users expect from the app and to know which problems users face (i.e. they defined our user requirements). Later on, they sent surveys to users to find out what people thought of our (beta) app and what they still missed.

Currently, the company has quite a reliable app live. However, to be more inclusive about users' needs and wishes, they would like to keep as much contact with the users as possible. EatMyRide has access to quite a large group of users. They can distinguish three user groups, and their goal is to address the wishes of all the user groups equally:

- Riders of the cycling club CS030; they know many of these riders in person
- Professional riders of Team Sunweb; they can reach out to them via their staff
- Their regular user base; several thousands of people who have downloaded the app and registered

To improve the current methods of validation, they are adopting a new user-centred approach on top of what they already deliver. With this new method, they reach out to athletes that like their social media posts and offer them digital sports nutrition coaching for free. This coaching is not restricted to app features. Below is how it works:

- They deliver coaching, which is just app usage via features they already have deployed.
- They deliver coaching comparable to features designed but not yet deployed. For those, they try to deliver the same value manually via email/chat for the time being. For example, a user provides its typical pre-race breakfast, and they provide back better suggestions (if needed)
- They hope users come up with more requests because they feel like asking us anything. Besides, they hope to create a group of 'ambassadors'.

While the group is still small (and not fully scalable), the positive response rate is high. They first assess their needs and tell them what they can do. Then they ask for their goals and timelines. Based on this all, they set several steps to follow and define the next steps. The risk is that the users reply mostly to the things the company suggest. However, they would like to arrive at a more credible method of collecting user feedback and wishes. The process is only manageable up to several hundred users. However, the workload should decline since they will have more and more automated functionalities over time.

The challenge we face and aim of the assignment

To implement more user-centred features into our app, the company first wants to make sure that they will work on developing the features that enrich the users' experience with the app. The company distinguishes five iterative phases in the app development, through which they implement new features:

1. Discovery – Finding out which problems users face and what solution they need and how our technology can help them
2. Design – Designing the app based on the user requirements (i.e. user stories), creating prototypes and letting users test these and give feedback
3. Development – Actual software development of the functionality
4. Deployment – Releasing the functionality and popularizing it by marketing
5. Updates – Maintaining and improving the functionality based on user experience

To perform steps 1 and 2 of the app development decently, they want to set up a system to:

A. Find out what are the main problems users still face when it comes to sports nutrition.
B. Validate their solutions for their problems before development and launch of the features (e.g. by letting the users test prototypes)

To achieve this, the company has three main questions:

1. How should we design the feedback system in order to inspire the users to give feedback? What are the best practices to reach out to the users of EatMyRide app to find out the problems they face?
2. How should we reach out to users to find out which problems they face? Should this be done in the app? If so, at which moment?
   a. What is the most effective way of collecting feedback? What questions should be asked to users of the app?
3. What fosters users' creativity in providing feedback? What should be the protocol for asking for feedback?
   a. How can we make sure that we get a representative test group that can test prototypes of the app?

In the end, the company would like to design a feedback system implemented in their app that enables them to keep in touch with the users and to gather feedback in a validated way.

What do we expect from a masters' student?

The student is expected to understand the user practices of app usage in different ways, and investigate the best practices for getting feedback from the particular user group of EatMyRide app. The research phase will include a literature review as well as co-design sessions with direct users (e.g. cyclists and other coaches) about their preferences and wishes to unravel the best feedback mechanisms and methods. The company has a large community of cyclists that could be of help in this assignment. Therefore, the student will be supported by reaching out to the user groups.

The student will work on developing a tool/system that will work in/together with EatMyRide app. In the end, the student is expected to design a system that helps the company to get direct feedback from users to 1) find out which problems users face when it comes to sports nutrition planning and 2) get feedback on ideas and prototypes that they provide. Setting up such a sound system and collecting feedback in a decent and validated way can be of great value to the company.

For this master assignment, we are looking for a student(s) who are highly interested in user research and UX design. Being interested in cycling is also a bonus ☺.

Start date: As soon as possible after the announcement of this assignment (November 2020)

For questions, please do not hesitate to contact the company and UT supervisors:

a.karahanoglu@utwente.nl

joram@eatmyride.com

hans@eatmyride.com