

Reflection - DBM160: Data Enabled Design - Niek van den Berk - 1234269

The course Data Enabled Design was an interesting opportunity for me to learn about the Data Enabled Design process and learn more about how to use data to design. To start, I believe the Data Enabled Design process is fitting to me as a designer. Within past design processes I used a variety of methods to gather user data. This course, however, taught me to combine these data gathering methods with data gathering probes. Receiving quantitative data from the probes, which can be combined with the qualitative data from user interviews and context mapping.

Within the contextual step I learned to set up a data gathering plan which encompasses holistic and detailed aspects of the food waste context. Additionally, I learned to set up a context mapping fully myself. Using creative assignments to get a deep understanding of user feelings and thoughts. The assignments were received with great enthusiasm, which I was pleased by. Using the ESP modules to create the probes, however, was not part of my focus of this project. The project confirmed this does not fit my vision. As a result, I did not reach this goal within my PDP. On the other hand, I well implemented my service design and empathic qualities to take on the qualitative part of the study.

At the end of the contextual step I learned to bring these insights together into a clear insight overview within the presentation. Where I could combine my earlier skills with new skills learned. This greatly fits my vision and identity as a system thinker. Looking at the problem on a both holistic and detailed level. Within future projects, I will use the knowledge from this step to create more holistic, longitudinal, unbiased and clear user findings within a service design context. Enhancing the empathising for user to a next level. Not only looking at what people say (usually done within Service Design) but also at what people do.

The informed step within this course, however, was more complex and led to more difficulties within this project. Making the translation from the probes within the contextual step to one of the three provided types of informed directions. Doing a design synthesis on the different findings found in the contextual step was relatively easy. However, the group was stuck on trying to find a solution for personalising food waste feedback. In the end, it was chosen to send personalised prompts to users. Reflecting back, I feel this decision lacked creativity. The decision was made to focus the study on increasing awareness and reducing food waste as a result. This shifted the focus of the study more towards an actual study than designing a solution through means of data. The solution proposed now (prompts + questionnaire) feels like it could also have been a contextual step itself. Something I would definitely pay attention to within future projects.

In addition, the study made use of a Wizard of Oz structure, using a predefined setup with multiple areas and prompt types. This made the study quite complex to perform within such a short time span and data available. As a result, the effects of proposing different prompt areas and types of prompts was difficult to be recognized. These results therefore showed a need for an iteration. During this step we used the available data to iterate accordingly. Here I again saw the strengths of the data enabled design approach as we iterated within the informed step to better tailor the design to user needs. Something I enjoyed doing and taught me that data can add to the substantiality of findings and design decisions.

In the end, however, the informed step did not feel like a concept for me. The aspects of micro-intelligence are present, however, the parts of the concept still feel very explorative and more set-up like a study to solely increase awareness and decrease food waste. Despite the iteration, the micro-intelligence feature within our final concept is still a questionnaire, which I believe is quite uninspired. I feel this is partly due to the fact some group members do not study ID (anymore). As a result, I noticed my creative mindset was not triggered as much as within other projects. However, the group did focus on creating a low-effort way of gathering data by choosing a digital solution. One of my goals within my PDP. I felt, however, that choosing a digital solution space confined the group to a select amount of solutions. One of them being a chatbot, For next projects I would want to use my UX design skills within the data enabled design process and create more creative solutions within the informed step. In addition, I want to investigate more creative options to create a micro-intelligence solution. Lastly, I want to be more assertive in my group to be include creativity if this is lacking within the solution space.

In the end, I am not fully satisfied with the project. However, I did learn which mistakes we as a group made by looking at other groups. I still think we provided an interesting micro-intelligence solution that did show interesting insights to understand the targeted audience on a deeper level. I felt like I could actually understand the audience better through means of the data-enabled design process. Which, as mentioned earlier, I feel sometimes lacks within for instance a service design process where a Double Diamond structure is used to empathise. Personally I would use the Data Enabled Design process to create a micro-intelligence system in the future too with a focus on a UX solution. This fits my interest in design and I believe this could enhance the both holistic and detailed view I try to achieve within the process of designing a viable solution. As creating physical solutions is still confirmed not being something I admire, I want to search for creative digital solutions that can be used within the Data Enabled Design process in the future.