

Assignment 2D: Design Research Review

Summary of Findings:

Through our research and interviews, we were able to learn more about our participants regarding their behavior towards reading. Although the age of technology has allowed reading to be more convenient on personal devices, people still enjoy reading through physical mediums. It was interesting to understand how it has affected the participants however, for example they commonly view cell phones as a distraction to their reading, whereas a decade ago this would not have been a problem. In addition, our participants commonly find new books to read online, as they like to learn about new topics in order to keep up with certain trends.

Design Research Participants:

Participant 1

Participant 1 is an Informatics student at the University of Washington. We interviewed him at the Informatics lab in Mary Gates. Participant 1's favorite genre is fiction. He finds new books to read by getting recommendations from friends or searching for things that interest him on the internet. Participant 1 reads often, sometimes daily. He prefers to read before bed. Participant 1 prefers paperback books, but has also found himself increasingly reading on his phone instead. Ironically, he also states that his phone is also one of his greatest sources of distraction while reading as well. Participant 1 expressed that he primarily reads for enjoyment, but also liked to read in order to find inspirations for his own writing, which is a personal hobby of his.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is an Informatics student at the University of Washington. We interviewed her at the Informatics lab in Mary Gates. Participant 2 prefers to read non fiction books, and likes to think of her reading as a form of self development. Participant 2 likes to use the site Goodreads in order to find new material to read, but also likes to get recommendation from friends to find out what to read next as well. She prefers reading a physical book. She likes to read before bed in order to help her fall asleep, and on the bus to pass time. She likes to read 2 to 3 times a week. She cites her phone as her greatest distraction while reading. Her phone is a distraction due to notifications from text messages and social media alerts. She says while she sometimes wishes she had more time to read she usually is able to read when she feels like it.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is also an Informatics student at the University of Washington, who we also interviewed in the Informatics lab in Mary Gates. Participant 3 prefers to read action and mystery novels, which he likes to read for excitement and in order to escape the mundane. Participant 3

likes to find new books to read by browsing the *Times* top 100 list of books, and also likes to browse Amazon book reviews for suggestions. Participant 3 also prefers reading through physical books, and finds his greatest distraction to be when his phone goes off and he gets a message from a friend. Participant 3 said that he liked to read in bursts, and found himself reading a lot more on the occasion that he finds a book that engrossed him. Participant 3 also prefers to read at night, usually on his couch before bed. Participant 3 said that sometimes he uses reading to procrastinate, but also says that he wishes he had more time to read as well.

Design Research Themes

Reading Before Bed

Although some also stated that they liked to read while taking public transportation in order to pass time, the idea of reading before bed resonated strongly with all participants interviewed. This leads to suggest that reading before or after an important event in the day would be a great way to enforce a strong habit of reading. Perhaps we could continue to encourage users to read before bed in order to fall asleep, or we could possibly encourage students to read for one hour after their last class in order to unwind. One issue that might come about reading before bed specifically is that it could interfere with sleep on occasions where a book is too interesting to put down for certain users. However, the idea of reading surrounding specific events is definitely something we would like to explore more.

Preference of Physical Books and Phones as a Distraction

While one participant stated that they usually read on their phone nowadays, all users expressed a preference toward physical books and cited phones as a major distraction to their reading. This suggests that reading a physical book over using an electronic device could help promote focus on the reading. However, we cannot force all users to utilize physical books, so it might be difficult to use this theme to further our design. It might be worth looking into a non intrusive way to promote physical book use, such as a “collection” tracker that shows the transformation of a bookshelf over time. Although more information would be required before deciding whether or not this was something worth spending time on to incorporate into the design.

Additionally, we will also need to explore how we can leverage phones as a means of keeping people focused during their reading sessions rather than acting as a distraction. A common problem was that phones caused a distraction, but there was no method for our participants to re-engage in their books.

Getting Recommendations from Friends:

All participants stated that they often get ideas on what to read next from their friends. This trend suggests that if there is a social aspect to reading, users might be inclined to read more. One participant also stated that Goodreads played a part in her reading habits. Goodreads is interesting because it allows you to share what you’ve read on your profile and check off books you’ve finished. If users could share what they’ve read to their friends, and see what their friends are reading, it may encourage them to spend more time reading. Checking off books that have

been read thus far could also play well with the self development approach to reading, which one participant expressed, where users could check off books related to learning about a certain subject or historical event. Adding a social aspect to the design might over complicate the design and cause it to lose its original focus, so it's important to approach this idea carefully.

Task Analysis

1. Who is going to use the design?

Based on our research work, this design would likely be used by individuals that have an enjoyment for reading, and perhaps somewhat of a habit of doing so already. We have found fewer people than we originally expected that indicated that they wanted to read, but did not necessarily have time for it. We decided to exclude individuals who did not have an interest in reading at all since they were not apart of our target audience.

2. What tasks do they now perform?

Currently, our interviewees reported that reading tends to be a very conscious effort for them, something that they do as needed to fill the time, or right before they go to sleep. It is notable that in both of these cases, reading is used as a sort of transition between two parts of a person's day.

3. What tasks are desired?

Our interviewees reported that they had the desire to read more, but sometimes found doing so to be difficult. This can be broken up into tasks by considering that they tend to use reading as a sort of transition between events. To better help individuals to accomplish this goal, we can a) identify transition periods during which a person can read, and b) help to eliminate/limit distractions from outside sources, such as the commonly identified phone.

4. How are the tasks learned?

For the most part, our interviewees identified themselves as already having a sort of habit built up for reading. They had instead expressed desire to build upon it. Each person that we interviewed identified a slightly different motivation as to why they chose to read, but they each came back to wanting to be able to consistently undertake this task.

5. Where are the tasks performed?

From our interviews, we discovered that most people tend to conduct their reading sessions in a relaxing environment, such as while lounging on the couch or in bed before sleeping. They also identified it as a sort of intermediate in some cases, such as while being on a bus, during which they would use the reading to fill the time.

6. What is the relationship between the person and data?

The primary relationship between the person and the data results in their ability to accomplish their original motivation for reading. Each person's motivation is different, and that cannot necessarily be quantified through page numbers or the time that they read. What we do propose is that through design, we are able to help people better meet

these goals by pushing them to extend these quantifiable metrics. It is from these that people can further build their habit of reading.

7. What other tools does the person have?

Each of the people that we interviewed identified regularly having a phone on them, though this was more often than not identified as a distraction. However, this is worth nothing as a potential tool. It is also important to note that this does not necessarily hold true for a wider population of people that this design could perhaps be applicable to, though we do continue to limit the scope of our problem to college age individuals.

8. How do people communicate with each other?

The individuals that we interviewed did not identify any major points at which they communicated with other people during the task of reading. This is not to suggest that there is not the potential for such a thing, merely that it does not often occur currently.

9. How often are the tasks performed?

A trend we noticed was that reading was completed either while traveling (between school and home) or at night (before going to bed). The participants identified as reading 3 days out the week on average, with a desire to increase this number being something that they have identified throughout the interviews.

10. What are the time constraints on the tasks?

Most people can only read for a limited time before getting bored, being interrupted by another task, or getting distracted. From the interviewee responses, we gauged this time frame to be anywhere from 30 minutes up to 2 hours. This is a significant limitation on our ability to increase the amount that an individual is able to read. This will likely also drive us towards an increase in the number of times that a person is able to read, instead of solely the longevity of a single sitting.

11. What happens when things go wrong?

When our interviewees got distracted while reading, it would result in ending their reading session prematurely. This was because they would move on to a new task and forget to continue their reading session. This also makes for an important consideration in the potential use of a phone as a tool to help direct people, as they find it to be one of their biggest distractions, and could potentially prove to be counter-intuitive.