

Self Checkout Abstract

Background

In the mental healthcare space, there are several ways for people to track their moods and feelings. Among them is journaling, which has been found to have positive effects on mental health. With people's dependence on phones increasing, mobile applications have been created with the purpose of taking the place of the journaling process while still providing the benefits that come with journaling. Self Checkout creates a space for users to care for their mental health by using a combination of mood tracking, self care checklists, notifications, and personalized recommendations.

Methods

The project came about after looking for a mobile app which would allow users to keep track of how they are feeling. The app was written using Swift and designed in Adobe Photoshop. We used Trello to keep track of deadlines and progress. Google Drive was used to create documents, presentations, and surveys. At different points throughout the process we also used Slack to facilitate communication within the team. To gather analytic information, we implemented Fabric.

When creating the first version of Self Checkout, we consulted with Katherine Cohen-Filipic, a sociology professor and a professional counselor, to gain insight and get a general professional opinion. Additionally, we conducted individual user testing at different points in the process to get and a focus group towards the beginning of the process to better understand what a user would like to see in an app like this.

The work was carried out over the course of four semesters from ideation to the release of an updated version of the app. The idea came about in Fall of 2015 as a part of an

assignment for the Topics in Media Technology course. After working on it as part of the Emerging Media Project in Spring of 2016, the first version was released into the App Store in April 2016.

In the following semester, a business model for the app was put together as part of the Entrepreneurial Innovation course. The 2.0 version of the app, which includes a redesign as well as the integration of a predictive algorithm, is being developed as part of the Emerging Media Capstone and will be released in May 2017.

Results

After launching the first version on the App Store, we have had 750 downloads since launching with over 270 monthly active users. We received one user review on the App Store that went into detail about how they use the app to keep track of their moods, and later show their therapist and how it helps in managing anxiety and depression. It also mentions how it is useful to “track trends, [their] triggers and things that improve or deteriorate [their] mood.”

Conclusion

Self Checkout gives the user the tools to address their mental health and help them better understand it. Recent trends in increased awareness of the subject of mental health provides a space for users to apply Self Checkout to their daily lives. By combining technological components with the basic concept of journaling, Self Checkout aims to turn mood tracking into a more established habit. In turn, increasing the user’s self awareness.