

Importance of personality in mobile applications and development of an app for ordering dry cleaning services.

Mobile applications are becoming civilized enough to simulate human behaviour in the form of characters and emotional text. Programmers need to incorporate personality into their applications to enhance user experience and stay ahead of competitors. Home deliveries within dry cleaning services are increasingly popular in the U.S. During this thesis an app for iPhone was developed that enables users to buy these services and overview the process in a personal matter.

When users think and reflect upon an application they have used, and remember the experience as a positive one - they are likely to use the application again and overlook any defects or negative aspects of the application. This is an aspect important for applications competing with other products. Imagine a rollercoaster, how the initial fear and angst during the ride is soon forgotten when the reflective rush and pleasure has settled in. Now if an app gives an amusing and personal experience for the user, the playfulness of the application could overcome any negative aspects of the app and persuade the user to continue using this app instead of a competitor's.

The way people perceive avatars and text is an individual experience. Some people would love for apps to be really funny and amusing to use. Others would find functionality way more important than a personal experience using the app. While testing the app developed during this thesis some people loved having an animal moving around and speaking to the user while others found it disturbing. It is important for programmers to understand the people intended to use their application to be able to add a personality that will enhance the experience for that specific target audience. This thesis intended to find such a personality for people using dry cleaning services in the U.S. while programming and designing an app that would enable users to order dry cleaning from their iPhone.

This thesis was divided into six parts - covering research, avatar drawings on paper and on screen, designing code structure, implementation of code, user test and implementation improvements. A single person conducted the thesis, taking on the role as researcher, programmer, designer, test leader and writer. To be able to get a project overview and making sure the project was on schedule a method of project management was used. A traditional framework for team collaboration on complex software projects was altered in order to better suit a one-person project.

This app for ordering dry cleaning was tested and evaluated to find out how easy it is to use and also how the personality of the app affected the user. Two versions of the app was tested, one with personality in the form of an avatar animal and emotional text implemented, and one version without. Although it was highly appreciated when the app spoke to the user in a personal matter – the avatar was concluded to be too disturbing when placing orders. While

considering toning down the avatar or removing it completely for this application it was decided to let the animal go. Some emotional text was kept in order to keep a personal connection to the user. For similar projects it will be important for the developers to realise how much space and animations to give an avatar – for serious applications they should be extremely toned down while in humours applications let such characters come alive and take up more space.