

## **DIEP Final Report**

Over the course of this semester, I've learned many things. Below is my reflection on each project, using The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's (RMIT) DIEP framework.

### **Project 1: People Watching**

For this project, I sat and observed the people walking up and down Winchester High Street, while standing near the Butter Cross. I made notes of all the things that I found interesting.

The reason I chose to make continuous notes of what I observed was so that I could quantify everything I saw. Before I started the project, I didn't have a plan. I was just going to sit and observe for three hours and only take notes when necessary. But once I started, I realised there was so much to take in, that I probably wouldn't remember much of it (except for things that really stood out) by the time I finished. Taking note of some quantitative data helped understand what people do, the different purposes for which they were out, the demographic, and others. Over the three-hour period, this proved to be helpful, as I was able to notice trends that occurred.

This exercise taught me patience and made me realise how important quiet observation can be. It's easy to fade into the background in a crowded place. I also learnt to make sense of data in a particular context, as I had collected quite a bit, and not everything served a purpose, so I had to exclude certain parts. This helped me work on my indecisiveness and conclude what information would be best and most relevant to include.

This project also helped me learn to think from other perspectives. When I presented it, everything made sense to me, since I did all the work, but it was pointed out that I left out a key point in my presentation - I had phrased it to ask, "What does the Butter Cross see?" but didn't include the number of people who actually came to see it in

my work. While I knew the answer, I didn't realise that it was a crucial part that was missing.

Going forward, there were a couple of things I decided I would change for the next projects:

I'd make sure that the data I collect is relevant to the problem that I am trying to solve. Here, there wasn't really a problem, but because I had so much data that it was difficult to decide what to include and how to present it. I've realised that there's no point in having a surplus of information if it doesn't serve any purpose. With the projects I've gotten after this, I made sure to look only for relevant information.

I also plan to make go over my projects with an unfamiliar perspective, one that has never seen the work before, to catch points that may have been missed, or things that don't make sense to a fresh set of eyes. With this, I hope to present my projects in a way that do not require prior context.

## **Project 2: Being Human**

For this project, I designed an app that would encourage people to use their phones less and focus on their work, by limiting access to apps of their choosing and motivating them to be more mindful.

I started off with the thought of creating a mindfulness app with a gamified element, but I also wanted to make it unique. Upon completing market research, I saw that there was a plethora of apps that already used a gamified approach to focusing on tasks. In an attempt to stand out, I decided to include as many functional elements as possible. After user testing, it was pointed out that I was attempting to do too much. I wanted to include many features, but it got to a point that everything would overwhelm a new user, which defeated the purpose of the app.

With this project, I learned many new things. I worked on creating user personas for the first time and realised that making informed assumptions was not easy. I worked on wireframes and while it wasn't my first time creating them, it was the first time I showed it to people for user testing. This was my first time carrying out user testing, and I quickly learned how valuable it can be. It was during this stage that someone pointed out that having too much would confuse people. I was able to iterate and create a better version thanks to this. I also learned that I need to be more prepared for user testing.

With this project, I understood many new things that I plan to implement going forward. I need to create a set of questions in advance of what to ask before user testing. Because I didn't have a fixed set of questions, I was relying on my memory and sketches for what I would ask the next user after one had finished. This led to missing out on a few things for feedback.

I also need to spend more time thinking about what could be perceived negatively when a new user looks at the app. I've learned that trying to do too much is counterproductive, so it's best to do a few things, but to do it well. On a similar note, I also need to think about what the downsides of the app I'm creating could be, and what the best ways to minimise it are, or how it can be circumvented entirely to avoid turning-off users from installing it.

With upcoming work, I intend to further streamline the processes I follow so that I have a better vision of what could confuse users.

### **Project 3: App360**

For the third project, we had to create an app for a device that would convert it from ordinary to *smart*. To do this, I created an app for a device that attaches to chairs, monitors how long you sit for and tells you when to get up.

I thought of many ideas on what devices could be converted to smart ones, and spent a long time debating between the final two - the chair and one for washing machines, but I ultimately decided to go with the chairs because I found out that apps for washing machines in residential buildings already existed.

With this project, I learned about how emotions play a crucial role during the design process. Emotional design is important because it creates more meaningful connections between users and the product. I also paid more attention to pain points of users this time, making my project less about what I wanted to do, and more about what would benefit the users more.

That being said, I did also struggle with evaluating what feedback to implement, as some of it involved adding features that I had included on my last project, like having a mascot. As I didn't want this project to seem too similar to my previous one, I decided against it. But reflecting on it now, I should have told myself that they are two projects with no correlation, and then assessed whether the feature would have been a good addition or not.

From this project, there are various things I've learned that I will implement in my practice in the future. The first is, I need to find a good balance between ideation and working. Going forward, I'll set a timeline according to which I'll work. I spent a lot of time thinking of what I could do on this project, not just with design, but also execution and presentation, and didn't get to implement a lot of it because it ate into my working/creation time. With that, my time management could use some improvement. I must keep in mind other people are busy too, and so if I need help with user testing or filming, it shouldn't be at a time when all other students are also focused on their assignments.

I also want to include more than one round of user testing from now on. I feel like it will give me better insights on whether the changes I've made have been useful or not, and further finetune the looks of the app.

I want to use sketch notes more often. It does take more time than regular notetaking, but information is much easier to digest with a quick glance. I also plan to read more books relevant to my field of study for projects. Having recently returned to reading physical books after a long break, it reminded me of the experience that the activity provides.

I've also realised that I need to be firmer about what is needed during the user testing process. I did not get any valuable feedback from one group, because they did not focus on the design or try to use it but just thought of and listed other products that could also be made smart.

Overall, I've learned a lot this semester and hope to take it all forward with my practice. I want to work on my design skills more. I want to have my own designs on the apps I create instead of sourcing it from websites. I'm also looking into better ways of structuring preliminary research to simplify work, streamline processes, and ensure a stronger foundation for proper development in my projects.