ASSIGNMENT 1 - NEEDFINDING

DUE: OCTOBER 13, 2022

OVERVIEW

With *needfinding*, we were interested in observing and understanding how people do things, to learn their goals and practices, and to generate (meaningful) design insights. This assignment should be done in group and aims at exploring some user needs, through a first round of interviews. You can use the all the lab hours devoted to this assignment to start working on the interviews and complete it in the following days.

PREPARATION AND EXECUTION

1. **Select a domain of interest <u>within</u> your theme.** Narrow a bit the problem domain of your theme and agree on it with the theme's teacher. For instance, if the theme is "Health," you might narrow down to *impact of diabetes on daily life* or *teenagers' nutrition*. The domain is something you want to explore, to investigate further, not an "app idea" or "project vision". Choose a domain of interest that you find interesting and can keep you engaged throughout the entire project development.
2. **Plan your interviews.** Decide who you are going to interview, where, and which questions you will ask. Specifically:
    a. INTERVIEWEES. You must interview <u>at least</u> 3 people (more is better) belonging to different "types"[1]. Do not just think about the *immediate* users, but also think about other stakeholders and about the different perspectives they can provide on the topic. As an example, this [IDEO design team]() was asked to redesign a cart for grocery shopping. The IDEO team did not only interview everyday customers, but also involved *lead users* (e.g., professional shoppers) and other *extreme stakeholders* such as grocery store managers. Lead and/or extreme users, as well as marginalized ones, often help to come up with better solutions and to create more inclusive design.
    The set of interviewees can include *at most* 1 Politecnico's student, *at most* 1 domain expert (optional), and *at least* 1 extreme user. If you interview just 3 people, be sure to include two immediate users.
    b. MODALITY. The interviews must be done *in person*, with people in their context. If it is impossible to conduct interviews in-person, for example if you have mobility limitations or the interviewee is not in the area, you can do it over video chats (e.g., Skype).
    c. QUESTIONS. Prepare some *pre-defined questions* for the interviews. A reasonable range can be 10-20 pre-defined questions. Questions need to be suitable for the domain at hand and might also cover some specific topics or issues you are interested in. Try to understand why people are doing things in the way they do by asking questions like "Are there existing solutions that people aren't using? Why or why not?". Be ready to skip some of them or ask any new/follow-up questions.
    Make an extra effort to observe and interview some *people in action* in the context of your domain of interest.

[1] Notice that you will conduct at least two other interviews as part of Assignment 2.

   d. MATERIALS. You need to record what, how, and why interviewees are saying and doing. Take some *pictures* of the interviewees and any relevant artifacts, *audio-record* the interviews, and *take notes* of the questions asked (including the ones that stem during the conversation) and the main points in the answers.

3. **Interview.** Conduct a minimum of three interviews, with the people you planned for. You are encouraged to conduct *more* interviews.
   a. DURATION. You can expect each interview to last between 30 and 60 minutes.
   b. CONSENT. The first thing to do is to get interviewees permission to participate in the interviews. Do it on paper and have them to sign it. Without this explicit consent, you cannot proceed.
   c. PROCEDURE. Two team members (and not more than 3) must be present at each interview, one leading the interview and the other(s) taking notes. This will allow teams to conduct interviews in parallel, if needed. Remember the interviewing tips discussed in the lectures and during the exercise in class.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FINDING PARTICIPANTS

- **Leverage your personal networks.** Do not excess with friends and family members, but friends of friends are a good starting point.
- **Use social media and online communities.** To get past second-degree connections, you can post on social media sites, online communities, and encourage people to share with their connections.
- **Find people in context.** If it is safe to do, you can try recruiting people at some locations related with your domain of interest. If you ask the right people respectfully, many will help you.

SYNTHETIZE THE RESULTS

Starting from the results of the interviews, **brainstorm a list of “initial” user needs** in the context of the domain of interest. Write down all the user needs that emerge from the interviews. Connect each need to one or more interviews and answers.

Needs are human emotional or physical necessities. Needs help define your design challenge and must be relevant for the domain. Remember: needs are verbs (activities and desires with which your user could use help), not nouns (solutions). Identify needs directly out of the user traits you noted, or from contradictions between two traits – such as a disconnect between what they says and what they does. It can be helpful to use the phrases “needs a way to” or “needs to be able to” in your list of user needs.

Finally, **narrow them down to around 4-5** of the most insightful ones.

DELIVERABLES

Create a new directory called “A1” in your assigned group repository on GitHub and upload, by the deadline, a presentation (PDF) and any raw material you want to share. Keep in mind that the consent forms, any notes, pictures, raw materials, etc. might be useful when preparing the final report.

The presentation should contain:

1. Intro

   a. Team members
   b. Domain of interest and why/how you chose it
2. Methodology
   a. Participants – Why were they chosen? Why are they appropriate? How were they recruited? Which is their age, gender, …? Who is the extreme user and why? Who is the domain expert, if any?
   b. Where were the interviews conducted?
   c. What did you ask?
   d. Team member roles for each interview
   e. Any material you used (camera, recorder, etc.)
3. Interview results
   a. Pictures and relevant artifacts
   b. Key quotes
4. Synthesis
   a. The most insightful user needs
   b. Next steps

ADDITIONAL READINGS

- 5 Steps to Create Good User Interview Questions (Medium blog post)
- Asking the right questions during user research, interviews and testing (Medium blog post)
- What to do in needfinding (PDF)