Understanding Young Mobile Users Behavior with a New Social Networking Communication Application

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Scope: Designing a user friendly product is the key objective for most of the product companies. This paper presents the results of an exploratory study designed to evaluate Deja, a new mobile application with communication and social networking functions. This study sought to understand how young users use this app to communicate with friends and other social networking activities from a human factors perspective.

Project organization: Human factors investigators conducted research design and analysis. Eight selected participants aged from 18 to 24 years old were recruited. These participants are all smart phone users with experience in using similar social communication app. All participants were asked to test Deja, and a combination of human factors methods were used for assessments including think aloud, observation, usability testing, user satisfaction survey as well as user behavioral survey.

Human Factors topics covered: This case study covers the human factors topics of user experience design and usability testing.

Project phases: There were three sessions for each participant. The first session was an open study session, in which participants were observed and asked to think aloud. The second session was a semi-open session in which follow-up usability tasks was conducted. Participants were guided by facilitators with tasks prepared earlier and open interview questions were raised to clarify certain special user behavior from observation results. In the last session, a questionnaire survey is required to fill in with demographic information, customer behavior survey and customer satisfaction survey. Data were analyzed independently by investigators not involved in data collection. Analysis involved identification of action points with comparison of number and type of results identified with each of the four data collection techniques.

Conclusion: The goal of this study is to identify user behavior of young users in Singapore for Social networking and communication app by developing an integrated user study. Our findings suggest that Singapore young users show certain characteristics that matched classic human factors theory regarding user behavior and marketing studies regarding this young group of customers. However, this special segment of users also shows certain behaviors violate the classic human factors and UXdesign theory and conclusions. In addition, the usage of social networking and communication on smartphone are different from other apps. Smart phone, i.e., iPhone and Android, plays a major role in determine users behavior toward the emerging apps. The bond between apps and those young users are stronger than expected. User study also finds that young users show different behaviors from other segments. For example, they resist to all kinds of tutorials that is quite different from other segments. In sum, the current study adds valuable insights with regard to explaining the sophisticated behavior of young smart phone user when using social networking and communication apps.