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Case Study MindDoc

How the user experience of a Mental Health App can be optimized with UX

Carina de López, eye square



With mindfulness trend, mental health is a topic that has increasingly come to the fore in recent years and forms the core of the MindDoc app. Together with MindDoc, the eye square institute conducted a study on the use of mental health apps. How was the project approached, what challenges does such a sensitive topic bring? And how is the app for online therapies accepted?

At this year's WdM, you will present the results of your joint study with MindDoc, the Mental Health App. What were the particular challenges in this project?

Carina de López: One challenge was certainly the heterogeneous target group. We wanted to survey all users, both those who had just installed MindDoc as a trial version and those who had been using the app for some time and were more familiar with it.

On top of that, we wanted to understand the motivation regarding the use of a very personal offer in a real context. This is where the classic interview reaches its limits methodologically.

What exactly was the objective of the UX project?

Carina de López: We wanted to find out what the user experience of the app is like - from the moment of download, through onboarding and daily use, to the result, the final diagnosis.

We were particularly interested in understanding what keeps users engaged and motivated to return to the app every day.

How did you approach the subjects and elicit their opinions and concerns?

Carina de López: We used a "multi-method approach" for this study, i.e. we placed a quantitative questionnaire in the app and used it to acquire real users. For the two qualitative modules, the user

experience test and the diary study with in-depth interviews, we recruited participants through our long-term partner Schlesinger. Here we invited people who did not yet know the app, but were open to the topic of mental health and at the same time liked to use apps frequently.

So we surveyed current users at scale using an online questionnaire. We talked to potential users in person about their motivation to use the app, followed them through a diary study, and looked over their shoulders as they installed the app and took their first steps as part of a user experience test.

Mind Doc is the platform where client-therapist communication happens. Where does the topic of UX end in this project? Does it extend into the client-therapist dyad?

Carina de López: The topic of UX ends when the touchpoint changes, i.e. when the clients receive the final diagnosis in the app and turn to a therapist. Here, MindDoc is then no longer represented with digital services and if it is an external therapy, MindDoc no longer has any influence on it. Nevertheless, there is the option of booking video therapy directly through MindDoc.

The user experience of the digital product would thus shift to another MindDoc touchpoint, namely the therapist.

In terms of data protection, it can easily happen that the sample is distorted, especially in the case of a topic like mental health, because not all respondents want to express themselves. How was this handled?

Carina de López: Trust is an important critical issue, especially when it comes to personal data in this particular category. For us, it is important not only to give users the feeling of security, but also to communicate our data protection efforts, including server location and data protection rights, as well as possible. The option to use the app completely anonymously, without a user account, is a good option for users who want to try it out first.

How do you manage to overcome the hurdle that the topic of mental health brings with it and turn potential users into actual users?

Carina de López: By taking the taboo out of mental health and making it an everyday topic. MindDoc magazine is a good example of this. In recent years, there has also been a trend toward mindfulness, which has naturally played into MindDoc's hands.

Mental health is no longer seen as something stressful and mentally demanding, but rather as a topic that can be dealt with in greater depth and time can be taken to reflect on one's own emotions - in other words, a little "me-time".

Once users have downloaded the app, it manages to turn the topic of mental health into something quite commonplace with a good mix of reflective questions, exciting content that people can identify with, and involving notifications. Of course, this doesn't always mean it's comfortable to engage with your emotional state. In our study, we found that people also found it mood-lowering to use the app on a daily basis. But that's part of the process and wasn't a reason to stop using it again.

Who can especially benefit from the results and experiences of this study? Who should not miss your event?

Carina de López: Everyone who develops, supports, markets digital products in companies, i.e. product managers, designers, developers and marketing managers. Furthermore, of course, everyone who is interested in methods, i.e. market researchers, whether from the institute or in-house. And finally, everyone who is also interested in the topics of mental health and mindfulness, like our study participants, and who would describe themselves as digitally affine.

Carina de Lopéz Unit Lead & Partner



Carina de López has been working in the field of User Experience at eye square since 2007, since 2010 as Unit Lead. She has a degree in sociology with a focus on methods and media sociology. She is specialised in qualitative methods, emotion tracking, personas and iterative user experience consulting during product development.