marktforschung.de
Interview Part 3 for the Web-Seminar 2023
09/08/2023

"Digital technologies can also reduce the quality of interpersonal relationships".

Lisa Wiese, eye square

Digital technologies and services are ubiquitous and support almost every aspect of our daily lives. They therefore have enormous potential to positively enrich our lives. However, the use of digital technologies can also have a negative impact on social relationships, the outcome of elections and the mental health of young people.

eye square GmbH | Schlesische Str. 29-30 | D-10997 Berlin
Fon +49 30 69 81 44-0 | Fax +49 30 69 81 44-10 | www.eye-square.com

In your webinar on Aug. 23, 2023, you look at the effects of long-term use of digital technologies on human well-being. Are there certain negative effects that are particularly common and how can these be identified??

Lisa Wiese: Negative effects can be seen in many aspects of our daily lives. Due to the business models of the IT industry, digital technologies are often designed so that users spend as much time as possible there.

This can lead to constant use and even technology dependency, leaving users with less time for fulfilling interpersonal relationships and pursuing important life goals.

Studies have also shown that conveying unrealistic images and realities of life in social media can lead to distorted body and self-perception, depression and anxiety disorders. Another issue is spreading misinformation on socially or politically relevant topics. This can result in a polarization of society and an increase in extreme political attitudes. Digital technologies can also reduce the quality of interpersonal relationships, for example by interrupting conversations or family activities. Even at the neuronal level, changes associated with the use of digital technologies are evident, such as a shortening of our attention span and memory capacity.

These effects can be detected by placing human well-being holistically at the center of product development and UX research and monitoring it continuously. A combination of different measurement methods (e.g., usability test, online survey, behavioral data, ethnographic approaches) that are used at different measurement times and capture different aspects of well-being is best suited for this purpose. In the usability test itself, primarily short-term effects can still be measured at the interface level. Long-term effects can be verified through ongoing UX tracking surveys and analytics metrics.

Purely behavioral tracking of user behavior based on engagement metrics such as clicks or likes is not sufficient, as it does not always reliably reflect what users really want to do and see online.

Behavioral data should therefore be supplemented by explicit user surveys.

What opportunities and challenges arise from the increasing integration of digital technologies into our everyday lives and how can we ensure that they positively influence our well-being in the long term?

Lisa Wiese: Digital technologies are already heavily integrated into our everyday lives. For many of us, the day begins with the ringing of the smartphone alarm clock, followed by an overview of the news, the day's appointments, and the first emails and text messages. Our social interactions, professional development and physical health are also heavily supported by digital technologies such as social networks, fitness and nutrition apps. Smartphones have become our constant companions.

Given the widespread distribution and use of digital technologies, there is an opportunity to positively influence human well-being on a large scale. To do this, however, it is crucial to incorporate findings from well-being research into product development in a targeted manner.

One challenge is to make this psychological knowledge accessible to designers and product managers in an understandable form and to translate it into the product context. Suitable methods for this include workshops, design tools and product-related measurement scales.

Another challenge is to convince decision-makers in the company to think more holistically about user experience. Not only positive emotions or hedonic product qualities, but also other aspects of human well-being should become the focus of product development. Through this targeted approach, we can help ensure that digital technologies not only make our everyday lives easier, but also have a tangible and positive impact on the well-being of many people.

Comparable to the topic of CX, the interest and enthusiasm for UX has risen sharply recently. What excites you personally about the topic of UX?

Lisa Wiese: For me, UX is the technology-supported design of human experience. Digital technologies influence our lives like never before. They are no longer just tools that make our everyday lives more pleasant or easier. They are also not "just" passive interfaces that are completely under the conscious control of the users and merely execute what they tell them to do.

Rather, they bring human experience - intended or unintended - into a form that it would not have taken without their existence.

Phenomena such as "phubbing", i.e. deliberately ignoring a real person present in order to spend more time on the smartphone, or the sudden interruption of all digital communication while online (so-called "ghosting") are so common that we have even found special terms for them.

Similarly, communication and team collaboration tools have enabled us to maintain personal and professional social contacts during lockdowns in the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I see my role as a UX researcher as helping to shape digital technologies in ways that positively impact human experience and our society. Due to the wide reach and high usage rate of digital technologies, I see very great potential for this.

What role does UX play in the customer journey of a company or brand's customers?

Lisa Wiese: This depends a bit on the business model, i.e. whether it is a purely digital or hybrid company with online and offline touchpoints. Basically, UX represents an important part of a company's communication with its customers. Thus, a poor UX can appear unprofessional or even destroy trust in the company. Conversely, a positive user experience can lead to users preferring a particular platform to other comparable services and visiting it regularly. In addition, the design of the interface also reflects the personality of a company.

What role does data protection play in the topic of UX for you and how do you deal with it?

Lisa Wiese: Data protection and transparency regarding data use are signs of respectful interaction with users and are of course essential - both in product development and in UX research. There is a lot to consider here and UX researchers should definitely educate themselves in this area. In the next few years, there will also be further EU legislation in the form of the Digital Services Act, which will oblige large IT companies to be more transparent in their handling of usage data. In my view, this is a very important step.

How do you see the future importance of UX for industries and brands on the German and international market?

Lisa Wiese: Besides the great team, I have always appreciated the psychological orientation, the scientific approach and the innovation orientation at eye square. Nevertheless, at some point I wanted to accompany the development of a digital product not only on the agency side, but from "beginning to end", i.e. from the product idea to the development of prototypes to the release and beyond. That's why I was drawn to the company's internal UX research. This gave me a good insight into how digital products are developed, what role different stakeholders play and what target metrics are optimized in practice.

At the same time, I became interested in "Digital Wellbeing" and the "Time Well Spent" movement and decided to take a closer look at these topics as part of a PhD. I am ultimately driven by the idea that the human experience needs to be considered more deeply, more comprehensively and with the

help of the right metrics in product development when developing digital products. I am convinced that this can actually be a lever for personal development and positive social change. To achieve this, I believe that academic and industrial research need to work even more closely together. As Director Human Experience, I am now also pursuing this goal at eye square and hope to be able to incorporate knowledge about digital wellbeing into many client projects.

How do you see the future importance of UX and "Digital Wellbeing" for industries and brands on the German and international market?

Lisa Wiese: Good UX has long since become the standard in many business areas. Simple usability or even pleasure in product use are therefore no longer the sole differentiating features.

In the future, digital services will be measured even more by whether they create real added value in the lives of users.

So when social networks like Facebook or Instagram declare that they want to "bring the world closer together" and "foster community," these goals should also be researched in UX research and product decisions made accordingly.

Lisa Wiese
Director Human Experience
eye square

Lisa Wiese is an expert in qualitative and quantitative user experience research and is involved in the development of innovative methods in the field of user experience and digital wellbeing at eye square. She holds a degree in psychology with a focus on statistics, human-computer interaction and neuroscience.

In addition to her work at eye square, Lisa Wiese conducts research at the Institute for Positive Design at the TU-Delft in the Netherlands. Her PhD thesis is about how everyday digital technologies, e.g. E-Mail and messaging services, social networks or online stores can be (re)designed to enhance our well-being. Lisa regularly publishes in HCI journals and speaks at conferences.