

DESIGNING A GAMIFIED SYSTEM TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN OLDER PEOPLE

Kucharczyk, E., Scase, M., Istance, H. *De Montfort University, Leicester.*

Background

Although gamified health interventions have the potential to enhance the quality of life of older users, there are significant design issues that need to be considered when designing games and gamified systems for an older target market.



Method

Target users were recruited to take part in an iterative user-centred design process to inform the development of an intervention for older people that can encourage better nutrition, increased physical activity, social participation and cognitive function using games and gamification. This process involves several cycles of: user testing; games prototype development and; evaluation and modification of prototypes. Stage one of this process was a focus group with 9 people (5 male; Mean age= 77.0, SD= 7.47) designed to elicit information on the needs, motivations and experience of older people in relation to games and gaming for health. The recording was transcribed and analysed thematically.

Results

Participants played puzzle games because they felt it improved their cognitive health but did not use games for any other health purpose. Participants were receptive to the idea of receiving gamified rewards for completing real world health activities. A key motivator for engaging with games was social interaction but it was important to participants that their abilities were equally matched with those of their opponents. Participants reported that using technology had become more difficult due to age related decrements in vision and dexterity.

Discussion

Participants were receptive to games and gamified activities that stimulated social interactions and met their level of ability. Ideas generated by participants have been used to inform the development of prototype games and a gamified environment (see Figure 1) which will be user tested in stage two of the design cycle.



Figure 1. Prototype gamified area