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Join the GOAL-movement


Our mission
Our mission is to encourage healthier lifestyles using IT solutions. Specifically, the aim is to effectively promote physical activity and healthy dietary intake. Our research aims to uncover the fundamental building blocks of mHealth tools to effectively promote these behaviors. We believe that impactful mHealth tools bring joy, and implement personalisation strategies. Hence, engagement and personalisation strategies in mHealth are the areas of our main interest.

Our challenge
Essentially, what we aim to evoke is behavioural change. Theory suggests that behaviour emerges when one has the ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform the behaviour. Hence, we try to improve your ability, motivation (by analysing your psychosocial state), and opportunity (by analysing your direct environment) to engage in more physical activity and to improve your dietary intake. At the same time, we evaluate what strategies were most effective for this purpose.

Our research tool: GameBus
We use the mHealth tool GameBus to design, implement and evaluate our health promotion campaigns. The platform allows for employing multiple behavior change strategies. At its heart, GameBus empowers users to share their healthiest moments with their relatives. Additionally, the platform rewards these healthy moments in health challenges, and has build-in functionality to automatically track these moments using wearables.

Research area: Rewards & direct feedback
We have collected empirical evidence on the impact of different frames of anticipated rewards and feedback messages on user engagement (see Nuijten et al., 2019a; and D’Hondt, Nuijten, & Van Gorp, 2019c). In future studies we will evaluate the impact of unforeseen (i.e., surprising) rewards and feedback on user engagement.

Research area: Challenges & social comparison
We have gathered empirical evidence on the effective configuration of our health challenges, e.g., by exploring the impact of role models in this setting. Furthermore, we have explored possibilities for personalizing these challenges (see Nuijten et al., 2019b), and are currently running a trial on the impact of personalisation of these challenges.

Our scientific publications