Thesis Project Portfolio

Medella

(Technical Report)

Bridging the Gap between Employee and Developer Attitudes to Encourage Employee Engagement with Corporate Wellness Applications

(STS Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis

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Sociotechnical Synthesis

An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

At the heart of both the STS research and the technical project contained in this binder is that statement we've all heard before. Everyone hopes to keep the doctor at bay but it's not always as simple as just eating an "apple a day". Both the STS research and technical project focus on providing that extra guidance we all need to stay out of the doctor's office by focusing on corporate wellness applications. The STS research digs into how to keep employees comfortable using such applications while the technical project was all about building a new corporate wellness application from scratch.

Through my STS research I was able to better understand how all involved groups communicate throughout the lifecycle of corporate wellness applications. Involved groups being the employers purchasing these applications services, the employees who use them, and the developers who actually build them. Analyzing the perspectives of these three individual groups along with their changing communication channels illuminated new strategies for establishing common ground among them. With the establishment of common ground, the hope is that employees will feel more at ease using corporate wellness applications and make the most of the content provided for them. In the end, the hope is to support employees in achieving the goal of keeping the doctor away.

The final result of the technical project was a prototype website for a corporate wellness platform that our team's customer plans to pursue further in the future. It will serve as the groundwork for a site that provides wellness content in many media forms to new clients for our customer. Personally, this project showed me what working on a real team of developers is like, providing insight into how to balance different personalities and ensure everyone holds enough

respect for one another to keep working. Engaging group dysfunction and misaligned expectations rather than just letting it go believing it would get better is one of my proudest accomplishments throughout this process.

Studying the reasons many employees feel reluctant to sign up for corporate wellness applications while at the same time developing one myself allowed me to obtain two different perspectives on this problem. My STS research illuminated all of the things that employees can find disturbing about the potential misuses of private health data. At the same time, I was able to witness the desires of a customer who wants their product to have the novelty necessary to edge out competitors. Blending the two perspectives together allowed for a balanced take on the development process as a whole.

As a final note, I'd like to thank our customer Grant Gamble for giving us the opportunity to work on such an interesting project and for being able to clearly articulate his goals for the project from the beginning. Getting to take a project from its conception into something tangible potentially serving to lift a start up off the ground has been an extremely rewarding experience.