Mobile Attachment – Emotional Attachment Towards Mobile Devices and Services

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ABSTRACT

In my thesis I address the topic of mobile attachment. I provide a theoretical framework for mobile attachment together with influencing factors that indicate user's emotional attachment (EA) to mobile devices and services. I investigate how the concept of user experience (UX) and EA are linked together and I outline how user behavior driven experience sampling can be exploited to measure mobile attachment. My research will result in design suggestions how the creation of EA to mobile devices and services can be facilitated.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.5.m [**Miscellaneous**]

General Terms

Measurement, Design, ages, Theory.

Keywords

Mobile attachment, experience sampling method.

1. MOTIVATION

People have developed a long-term relationship with their devices of everyday use – they have become emotionally attached to them [4]. Since mobile devices have become a fundamental part of our lives, this is especially true for mobile devices and their forthcoming services. Mobile devices enable us to stay in contact with our friends, to access information from everywhere, to be productive and efficient, to capture memories, and to be entertained. They make us independent, increase our mobility, and give us a freedom we do not want to miss anymore. Since mobile devices are also an expression of our personality and a symbol for our peer group membership they have become an extension of our self. On the other hand mobile devices can get annoying easily. On the one hand it is a blessing to be able to reach everyone, on the other hand it might be a course that it is expected to be reachable everywhere and every time.

Up to now research on the effect of user's emotional state during product handling, affecting the product's desirability and the user's emotional attachment to the product is still in its infancy. There is a need for a theoretical framework of mobile attachment, for methods to measure mobile attachment in order to provide recommendations for mobile attachment design heuristics. In my doctoral thesis I address these issues.

2. RESEARCH GOALS

My research questions are as follows:

- *How can mobile attachment defined?*
- *Which factors indicates mobile attachment?*
- *How can mobile attachment be measured?*
- *How can the creation of mobile attachment be facilitated?*

Starting with an extended literature research on the original *concept of attachment* [1] and *emotional attachment related to mobile devices* [4] [5] I provide a theoretical framework for mobile attachment together with influencing factors that indicate user's emotional attachment (EA) to mobile devices and services. I will investigate how the concepts of user experience (UX) and EA are linked together [3]. To measure EA I introduce *user behavior driven experience sampling,* which uses the experience sampling method (ESM) [2] with triggers based on user behavior.

Up to now I have developed a framework for mobile attachment including five influencing factors (likeability, importance, customization, symbolism, emotional valance). Based on these questions I have developed the questionnaire FeatMo consisting of 29 items. After a primary one week ESM study on mobile attachment (n=10) I have conducted a six-week ESM study (n=20) utilizing a self-developed ESM tool (MAESTRO) for BlackBerry mobile phones. The results of these studies show, that participants expressed a low emotional attachment to the mobile device itself but a high attachment towards the services and possibilities these devices offer.

3. REFERENCES

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