Introduction

This document lays out a plan for remote exploratory and evaluative research on an app interface designed by Jonah Conlin, Laura Pedrosa, and Will Rutter in their second semester of Carnegie Mellon University's Master of Arts in Design program. The interface design to be tested, temporarily titled "My Choice," is an early prototype of a mobile app intended to empower and assist individuals as they endeavor to learn about and potentially choose a form of birth control. In addition, the app explicitly situates the birth control choice in a larger historical and social movement and is intended to help those using it feel connected to a larger movement of inclusive sexual liberation and feminism.

The intention for this round of exploratory and evaluative research is to understand and collect feedback regarding the specific choices in interface design and experience design in the "My Choice" app.

Research Method

The following section includes all relevant information about how and why this round of research is being conducted.

Research Goals

The goals of this research are:

1. Evaluate different information architecture and navigation schemes, especially with regard to placement of historical information.
2. Evaluate the inclusion of historical information.
3. Evaluate approaches to birth control filtering.
4. Evaluate approaches to birth control comparison.
5. Evaluate approaches to birth control guidance, especially around questions.

Research Articles

Articles Provided by the Research Team

The following items (including hardware and software) will be provided and used by the research team to support the successful completion of this research effort:

- **Desktop or laptop computers |** Given the remote nature of this testing effort, computers will be used by the research team to communicate and share research materials with the research participant.
- **Zoom video conferencing software |** Zoom video conferencing will be used for this remote test in order to allow the research to communicate remotely with the test participant.
- **Figma collaborative design software |** So far, the Figma cloud-based collaborative design platform has been the venue in which much of the team's information architecture and interface design has been performed. This software will be necessary for the research team to share the intended design artifacts with the research participant.

Articles Furnished by the Test Participant

In order to participate in this research, the test participant must furnish the following items (including hardware and software) for their own use in the research session:

- **Desktop computer, laptop computer, or tablet |** Given the remote nature of this testing effort, a computer or tablet will be required for the test participant to take part in the research session.
- **Zoom video conferencing software |** Zoom video conferencing will be used for this remote test in order to allow the research to communicate remotely with the test participant.

Research Personnel

The research personnel for this research effort consists of the app designers: Jonah Conlin, Laura Pedrosa, and Will Rutter. The research personnel will switch off leading the research session in an attempt to give each member of the team a chance to take on the role of lead.

While one member of the research team leads the session, the other two members will observing the session and actively collect data and record observations.

Research Location

The remote nature of this research effort allows each member of the research team and the research participant to take part in this research session from different locations. Each member of the research team will, however, ensure that their location is safe, free from distractions, and private in order to respect the privacy of research participants.

Research participants will be provided by the instructors for the Introduction to Interaction Design studio course for which this research effort is being conducted. While the research team will not have the opportunity to communicate an appropriate location for the session to the research participants beforehand, it is suggested that the participants are located in a comfortable, safe location away from potential distractions.

Research Configuration

All test activities will be completed over Zoom. Wireframes and prototype will be stored in Figma's cloud-based design software and will be shared with the test participant via screen share over Zoom.

Recruiting & Participants

Participants for this research effort will be recruited by the Introduction to Interaction Design studio course instructors for which this project is being undertaken. As such, the research team will not be included in recruitment efforts and will gladly include any and all participants provided by the instructor team in research sessions.

Data Collection and Protection

While one member of the research team leads the study session, the other two members of the research team will be recording information and reactions from the study participant. The study will not be recorded.

Data will be scrubbed of personally identifying information before being stored digitally in any way in order to protect participant private information.

Research Protocol

Preparation

Prior to beginning the session with the research participant, the research team will meet and complete the following:

- Ensure that each team member is aware of their duties during the research effort.
- Ensure each member has the proper documents ready on their computer and a copy of this research protocol open for reference.

Introduction

Once contact has been made with the research participant via Zoom, the member of the research team taking lead for the introduction reads the following passages (allowing leeway for changes to dialect/language tone as appropriate for the situation).

Begin script:

> Hello! My name is [name of lead] and this is [name of other research team member] and [name of research team member]. We are the team that will be working with you today to evaluate a potential design for a mobile app about evaluating and choosing birth control options.
>
> *If necessary: May I ask your name? [Wait for participant to respond and, if appropriate], It's so nice to meet you!*
>
> First of all, I want to express our thanks to you for taking the time to join us today. By working with us you are playing a key role in our effort to develop this project. We really appreciate your willingness to help us with this this morning.
>
> So, as I mentioned earlier, we are going to be working with you today to evaluate a potential design for an app about birth control. This evaluation is going to involve us showing you an early, representational prototype of the app, asking you questions such as how you might complete certain tasks with the app, and end with us asking you a few questions about your experience with and impressions of the design. While we appreciate you doing your best to work through each of the tasks as best you can, if at any time you feel uncomfortable or do not want to finish a task, just let us know. You are never required to do something you don't want to do today.

To provide some context: our app is intended to serve a population of very politically active individuals who are interested in feeling like an active and vocal part of the movement for women's sexual liberation. We understand that this may or may not describe you: if not, that is no problem, your input is still extremely important and valuable since people outside the main audience will still interact with the app. And if so, great—you are part of our intended audience!

I also want to underscore that the subject of our research today is the app design idea—we are not testing you by any means. There are no wrong answers in this study and no particular answers we are "looking for" or otherwise "want to hear." The most important thing is that you just do your best with each of the tasks and answer the questions as honestly as you are comfortable.

Do you have any questions so far?

Think Aloud Technique Instruction

In this section, the research team member acting as research lead explains the Think Aloud Technique and asks the participant to use the technique during the session.

Begin script:

During the session, we're going to ask you to use something we call the "Think Aloud Technique." The Think Aloud Technique is basically a technique where you say what you are thinking, or why you are doing what you are doing, while you are inspecting the app design or working through one of the tasks. The reason we ask you to do this is that, while we can see what you do through the screen share, the think aloud technique gives us clues into why you are doing what you are doing and how you are making sense of the design. These factors are especially important to us as we work to improve the design.

To give you an example of the Think Aloud Technique in action, I thought I might do a quick demo with this... [lead quickly demos the think aloud technique with a familiar object].

Solicit Questions

This is a final opportunity for the research lead to ask a question before everyone moves on to the activities/research questions.

Begin script:

I know that was a lot, so before we move forward I want to ask one more time if you have any questions.

Context

First before, we get started into the interface, would you feel comfortable sharing more important parts or highlights of your experience with birth control over the years?

Research Activity 1: High-Level Impressions and Navigation

Part 1

Present the participant with a **home screen** and direct their attention to the navigation bar.

> The navigation information here shows the three main sections of the current app design. Tell me about what you might expect to find in each of these sections of the app. [If necessary, prompt with each section name]

Part 2

Present participant with navigable app prototype. Beginning at the main screen each time, ask participant the following:

> 1). Imagine you were looking for some guidance on what birth control methods to consider. How might you go about finding such guidance on this app?
>
> 2). Imagine you wanted to compare some different types of birth control with respect to their effectiveness at preventing pregnancy. How might you go about doing that in this app?
>
> 3). Imagine you want to record an entry about your experience with a birth control method. How might you go about using this app to do that?
>
> 4). Imagine you wanted to engage with stories of other people's experiences with birth control. How might you go about doing so in this app?

5). Imagine you wanted to get statistics about how birth control is used worldwide. How might you find that information on this app?

Research Activity 2: Filter Exploration and Evaluation

Part 1

Ask participant with the following question:

1) Tell me about the specific factors that you find important, or are curious about, when choosing a birth control option.

Part 2:

Screen: Factors to research

Read the following to the participant

I'm going to read you a set of factors one might find important while choosing birth control. For each, please rate that factor's importance to you in choosing birth control on a range from one to five, where one means not important at all and five means extremely important.

Once the participant indicates they understand the prompt, read the following factors to the participant:

1. Effectiveness in preventing pregnancy
2. Frequency of use/How often you have to remember to use it
3. Associated side effects or body changes
4. Whether it will change your period
5. Whether it is a hormonal method
6. How discreet it is
7. How it is used/method of application (shot, pill, implant, etc.)
8. How difficult it is to stop or change?

Research Activity 3: Comparison Exploration and Evaluation

Part 1

Ask the study participant the following question:

> 1). *Tell me about the factors you find important when comparing types of birth control.*

> 2). *Of the factors you mentioned, are any especially important or unimportant?*

Part 2

Present the study participant a wireframe of Comparison screen with 2-3 birth control methods

> Tell me what information you think this screen is trying to convey

Research Activity 4: Guidance Exploration and Evaluation

Present user with question text, one after the other:

> Imagine you are seeking guidance from this app about birth control options to consider. The app will pose a set of questions to you one by one. For each question, please describe your initial reaction to the question and how relevant you believe the question is to the birth control selection process.

Following completion of all questions:

> 1). Are there any questions we did not ask that you think we should include in the guidance tool?

> 2). How did the order of the questions affect your experience of them, if it did?

Research Activity 5: Historical Exploration and Evaluation

Part 1

Present the participant with **a home screen** and direct their attention to the navigation bar. Ask the following:

If you were seeking out information about the history of birth control, where would you expect to find it in this app, given the following options?

Part 2

Ask participant the following question:

How do you think historical context would impact your experience of learning about or selecting a birth control, if it would at all?

Closing Questions

- Given that our app is focused on individuals who are politically active, is there anything you expected to see that is not included, or anything that was included that surprised you?
- Is there anything you think we should know about your experience or impression of the app design today that we haven't asked about?
- Do you have any parting thoughts or words of wisdom for us about the app design?

Conclusion

In this section, we thank the participant and dismiss them from the research session.

Begin Script:

All right, we are all done! Again, I want to thank you for your thoughts and your time today. The feedback you've given us is immensely important as we move forward with this project.

I also want to add that, if you have any thoughts about the app design after this, we would love to hear them! You can reach us through Ashley and Raelynn, or email us directly using this email address [share email address through chat].

[GIVE PARTICIPANT OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND, AND RESPOND TO PARTICIPANT IN KIND]

Thank you so much again, it was a pleasure to work with you this morning. Have a lovely rest of your day.

Wrap Up

Research personnel consolidate notes and ensure that notes are scrubbed of the participant's personally-identifying information. If not the last research session of the day, configure research materials so they are ready for the next research session.