Evaluation of an Interactive Webbased Application to Promote Healthy Behavior

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Voedingscentrum eerlijk over eten

- Mission Netherlands Nutrition Centre
 "increase the understanding of food qualities and to encourage consumers to eat healthily and safely"
 - Mass media campaigns
 - Wide reach
 - Information only, does little to change behavior
 - Intensive, interactive interventions
 - Small reach
 - More effective in behavior change



Solution?

Interactive web-based application

- Wide reach
- Tailored advice
- Interactive
- Intensiveness variable
- Healthy Weight Assistant
 - Target population BMI 18 28
 - Supports achieving and maintaining a healthy weight
 - Focus on behavior (exercise and nutrition)





Healthy Weight Assistant

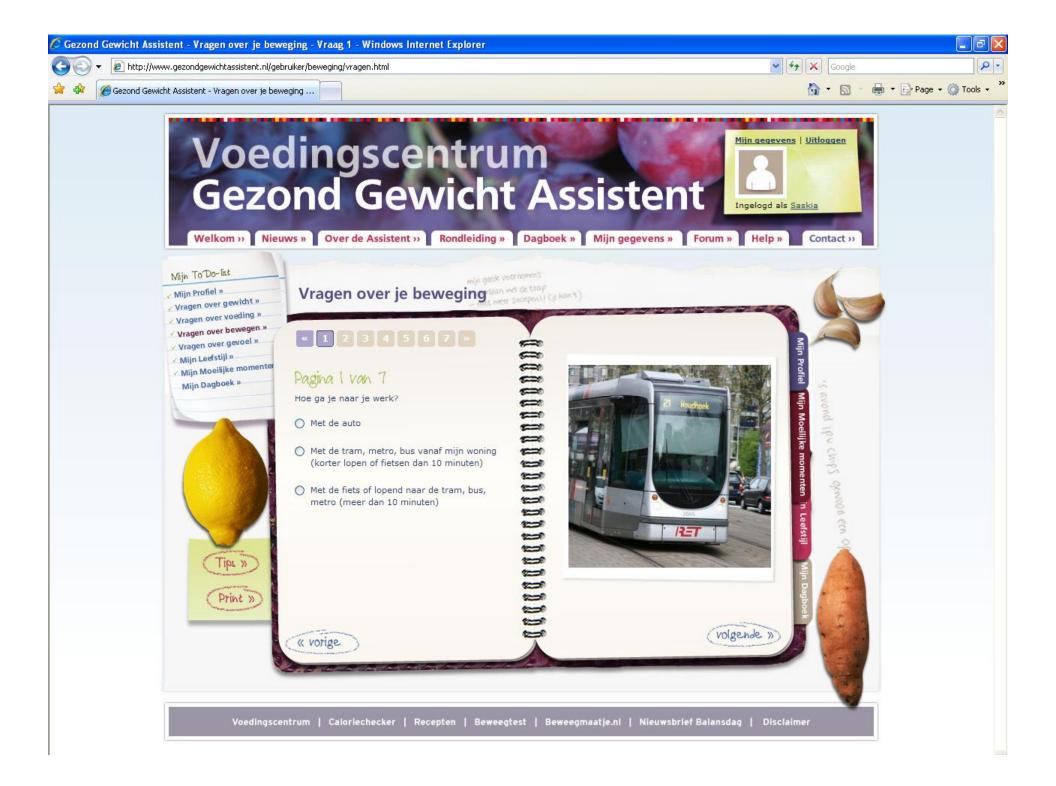
Based on

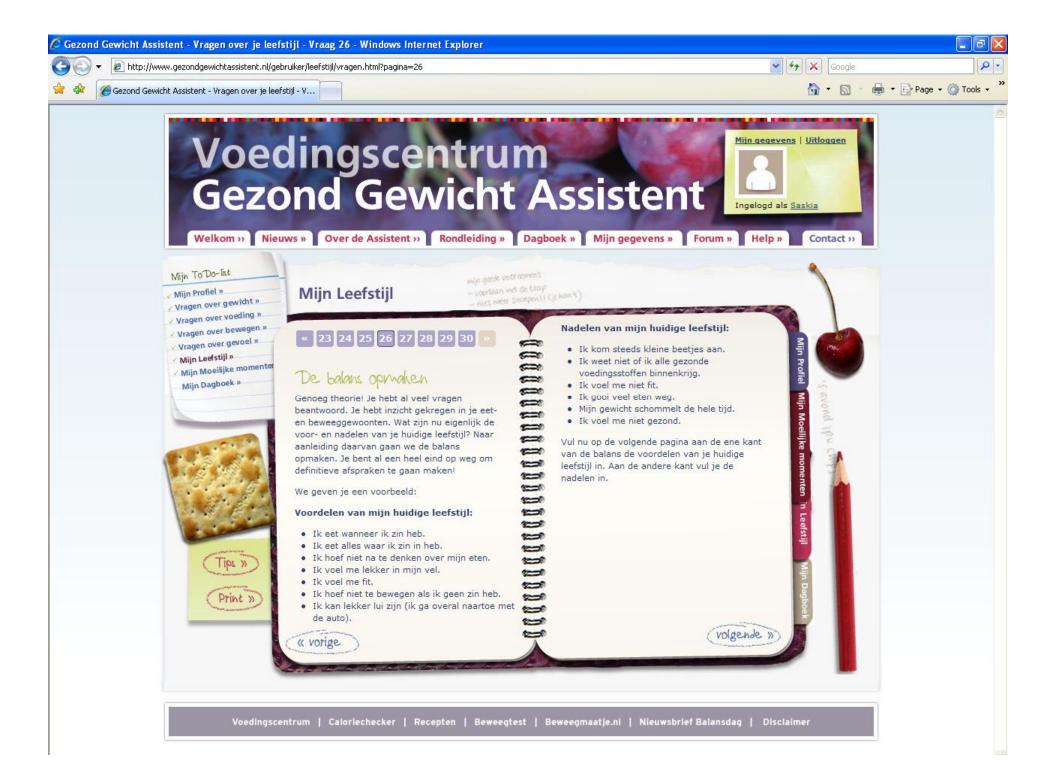
- Research University of Twente (Verhoeven & Nijland 2007)
- Transtheoretical model (Prochaska)

Consists of 4 phases

- Intake
- Motivation and goalsetting
- Difficult moments
- Monitoring progress











Research questions

- How do users value the HWA?
- How is the HWA being used?
- What effect does the HWA have on its users?

What are the requirements to successfully change behavior via an interactive web-based application?



Research

Test panel

 Research invitation in newsletter Nutrition Centre yielded 900 e-mail addresses of interested readers

Methods

- Online questionnaires (pre- and posttest)
- Usability testing
- Log file analysis
- Qualitative analysis



Methods I

Online questionnaires

1st questionnaire (n=706)

(before access HWA)

- Motivation and expectations
- Behavior (nutrition and exercise)
- Subjective behavior
- Knowledge
- Attitude healthy behavior
- Stage of change healthy behavior

2nd questionnaire (n=431) (after 6 weeks)

- Behavior (nutrition and exercise)
- Subjective behavior
- Knowledge
- Attitude healthy behavior
- Stage of change healthy behavior
- Use HWA
- Usability HWA
- Satisfaction HWA



Methods II

Usability tests

- Scenario tasks
- Analysis of problems, impressions, way of use
- Log file analysis
 - Google analytics
 - Entered data in HWA
- Qualitative analysis
 - Forum posts
 - E-mail contacts
 - Free text responses questionnaire 2

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Log file analysis

- Users Healthy Weight Assistant

n=430	male	female	total
Sex	5 %	95 %	
Education			
Lower	0 %	8 %	8 %
Middle	32 %	34 %	34 %
Higher	45 %	42 %	42 %
No Response	23 %	15 %	16 %
Mean age	29	29	29
Mean BMI	27	26	26

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Qualitative analysis

Problems experienced

- Technical
- Content
- Target population

"I'm sorry, but I find it a bit unstructured, you have to go from one thing to another and when you go back, you end up somewhere completely different, you have to look for everything, it bugs me very much."

"Loading takes too long, especially for people with a slower internet connection."



Qualitative analysis

Problems experienced

- Technical
- Content
- Target population

"Cumbersome and very time-consuming."

"I expected more of the possibility to get a personal advice."



Qualitative analysis

Problems experienced

- Technical
- Content
- Target population

"The Healthy Weight Assistant is helpful for people who know little of healthy living. I learned little new."

"Everyone who has ever been on a diet already knows these advices."



Qualitative analysis

Desired features

- More intelligent system
- Motivation
- Communication
- Visualization

"It would be nice if you could automatically see how many calories there are in the meals you enter in the diary."

"It's a pity you don't get an advice on the meals you enter in the diary (calories, fibres or fats), now you have to check that at the website of the Netherlands Nutrition Centre."

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Qualitative analysis

Desired features

- More intelligent system
- Motivation
- Communication
- Visualization

"A short daily reminder for a couple of weeks or a weekly reminder including a link to the HWA would help me make a habit of using the HWA."

"Before you start you get a lot of information. After you filled out all questions it's up to yourself. I miss a little support then."



Qualitative analysis

Desired features

- More intelligent system
- Motivation
- Communication
- Visualization

"When you use the diary intensively, it might be good to have a professional look at it who gives you personal advice."



Qualitative analysis

Desired features

- More intelligent system
- Motivation
- Communication
- Visualization

"I would like a graph or something, where I can monitor my weight. This is especially helpful when you want to loose a few pounds."



Preliminary conclusions

Opportunity

- Interested and enthusiastic users
- Reaching people who otherwise only have access to information

Optimization through motivation

- Reminders
- 'My goals'
- Adapting forum



Thank you for your attention! Any questions?

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Contact: s.m.kelders@utwente.nl

