

Designing 'Good Trip!': a co-design toolkit for young autistic adults and their carers to promote independence

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In the past years more and more people are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (Constantin & Hourcade, 2018). This does not necessarily mean that there are more people with ASD, however it does mean that there are more people who struggle with independence in today's society (Health Council of the Netherlands, 2009). Technology could offer a lot of opportunities with regards to promoting the independence of young autistic adults (YAA). One reason why technology is not being implemented in mental health care yet, is that the worlds of clients, carers, and designers is too far apart. For this the Design Your Life (DYL) research, which this bachelor thesis is part of, was set up. The DYL research is a collaboration between HAN University of Applied Sciences and University of Twente (UT). The goal of this DYL research is to develop a method (toolkit) with which YAA and their carer can find or design a technology themselves to promote the YAA's independence. A designer will no longer be needed in the final method (lectoraat Levensloopbegeleiding bij Autisme, 2018). In April of 2020 two pilots of the DYL research got started. The insights that resulted from this are a starting point for this bachelor thesis, for which the focus is giving equally important roles to the YAA and the carer, and promoting creativity, which consists out of originality and effectiveness.

The toolkit concept that is tested during this thesis is a board game called 'Good Trip!'. The game makes use of the Design Thinking approach. 'Good Trip!' consists out of six islands, five of which belong to the design thinking phases understand, define, ideate, prototype, and test. The final island includes the goal of the YAA. During the case study, the game is played in six sessions of approximately an hour. After each session there is an evaluation. The participants of the case study are a 23-year-old male YAA who receives protected living from RIBW-AVV, one of the partners of this research, and his carer of the past three years. While iterating during the co-design sessions they found the goals 'being happy', 'less stress', and 'a better sleeping schedule'. The product that they chose for this is setting up two alarm clocks on the YAA's phone, one for going to bed and one for waking up. The chosen product does not work perfectly but there are already insights for the second iteration. During this case study, the participants have gone through the design cycle once under my supervision. After the case study, changes are made to the toolkit. After this thesis the participants will continue with the next design cycle under the supervision of a successor.

The good points of this toolkit and method are, among other



Figure 1: Prototype outside

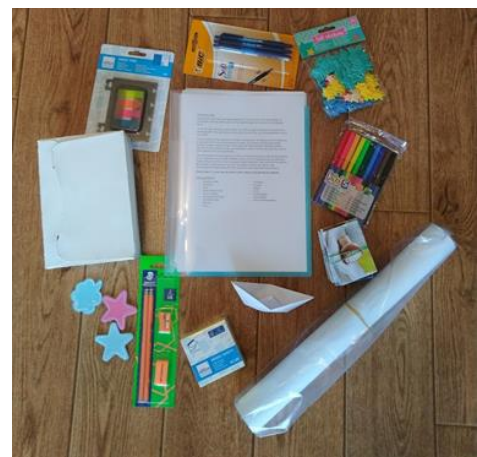


Figure 2: Prototype inside

things, that the YAA can speak for himself and decide for himself what he wanted to work on and how. The YAA and carer enjoyed having equally important roles and it was motivating that the toolkit was a game. The YAA had no trouble understanding the metaphor of the game. A point of improvement is the transition from loose ideas to a concept. At this point the participants were stuck the most.

For the final design of the toolkit, a few changes were made to the toolkit concept. Users can now decide for themselves how much time they want to spend on the co-design sessions and users can add both their goals as well as their chosen technologies to Dream Island. On top of that the final toolkit design allows users to use the toolkit several times.

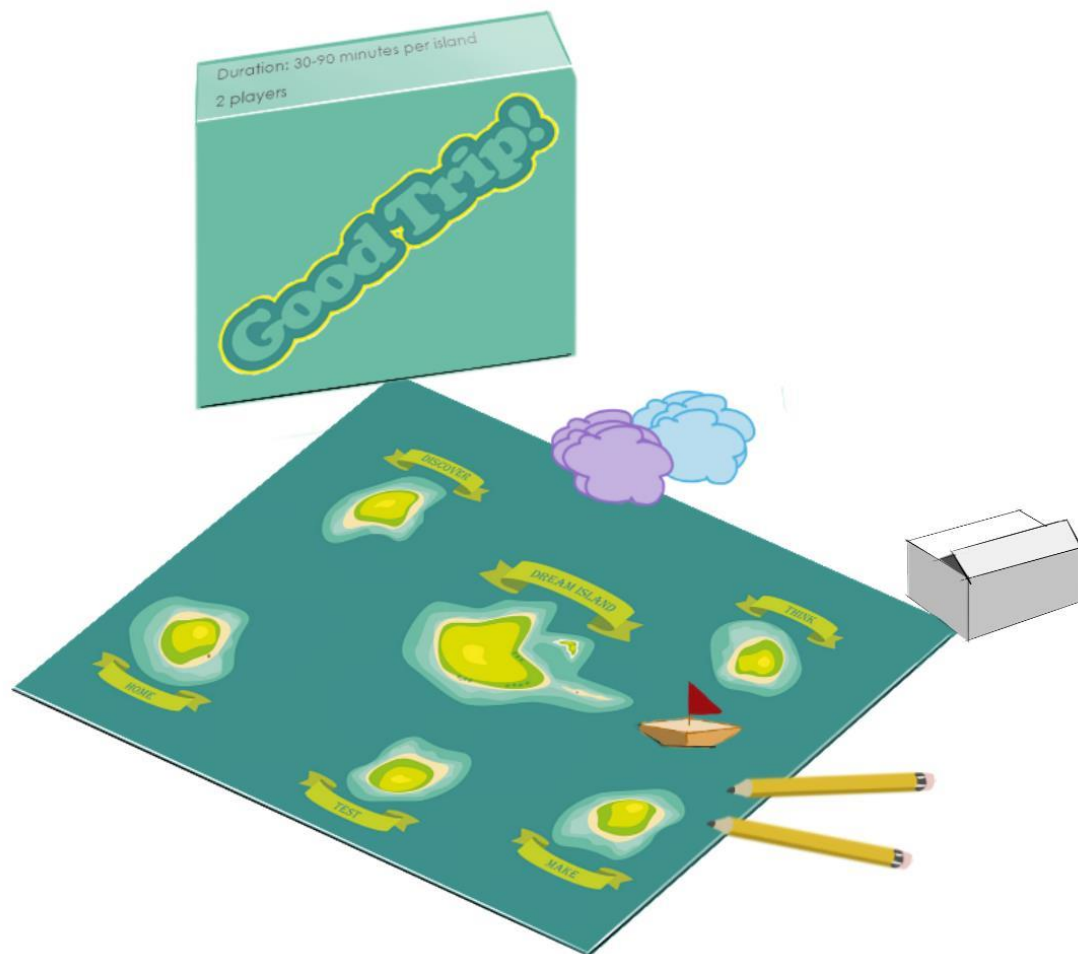


Figure 1: Final toolkit design

This research has shown that it is possible to design a method which enables the YAA and their carer to design or find a technology to promote the YAA's independence. Cards with an image, inspiration cards, which can be used during the brainstorming sessions, are a good way to promote originality. At the moment it is not possible to take away the designer. During this case study the designer was needed for the transition from loose ideas to a concept. The designer was also able to make additions for ideas that the participants were not familiar with yet and to find out why the YAA was not satisfied with something. It is expected that it will be possible to teach the carer the design qualities that are necessary for the co-design process. During the co-design process the carer learned that it is helpful to start small. The possibilities for this can be researched by a successor.

References

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