

# Usability Research Smile

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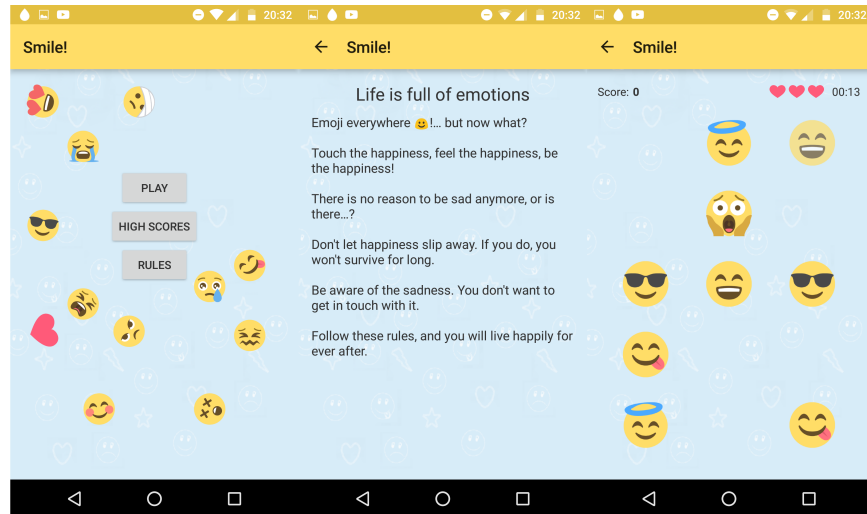
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# 1 Introduction

This research paper is about the app "Smile!", which is made by Lennart Jansen, Manuela Bergau, Adriana Frijo and Thomas van der Burgt. The application is an Android game, the goal of the game is to tap the happy smileys and to avoid the unhappy/angry smileys. The app consists of the game itself, local highscores and a rules page. We have added some screenshots to give an overview of the app below.



The goal of this paper is to create a usability research for the Smile! app, every aspect of the app will be thoroughly tested and reviewed. The app will be reviewed by our test persons from the R&D group "Niet te lang en niet te gek":

1. Britt van Veggel  
Third year Math student with Computer Science minor.
2. Nikki Jaspers  
Third year Math student with Computer Science minor.
3. Lars Ran  
Third year Math student with Computer Science minor.
4. Frank van Hoof  
Third year Math student with Computer Science minor.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Objectives

For this usability research we will be create a few test objectives. These test objectives will be tested with different scenarios, these scenarios will be tested

by all four different testers. While the testers are testing, the process will be recorded so it can be analyzed later.

- How well is the user able to navigate through the app?
- How quickly does the user learn to use the app's main functionality?
- How helpful is the tutorial?
- How long does the app keep the user interested?
- Does the user find the app challenging?
- Does the user like the highscore system?

## 2.2 Scenarios

We will be using different scenarios for our users to test, they are listed below. The table shows which scenarios are tested by which test persons.

	Britt	Lars	Nikki	Frank
First time user	x	x	x	x
User with free choice	x	x		
User reading the tutorial first			x	
User playing without tutorial				x
Looking through highscores	x	x	x	x
Conclusion after playing 5 times	x	x	x	x

1. First time user  
The user will be using the app for the first time, they have to describe what they see and we will be checking if they immediately know how the app works and know what to do. Is the interface clear and simple? Do they like the style and colors?
2. User with free choice  
After the first time user scenario, Britt and Nikki will be given a free choice without them knowing. Will they start the game without looking at the tutorial, or will they use the tutorial first? With this we can check if users want a tutorial or not, and if it might help to launch the tutorial when users play for the first time.
3. User reading the tutorial first  
This is essentially the same as above, but Frank is obligated to read the tutorial first. With this method we can see the if reading the tutorial helps at all with understanding the game quicker, we will also see if the tutorial

4. User playing without tutorial  
With this use case, Lars will start the game without the tutorial. With this scenario we can see if the app is self explanatory and if the user needs a tutorial at all. We can also see how fast the user understands the app by himself.
5. Looking through highscores  
After the games played with earlier scenarios, users will be familiar with submitting highscores. This scenario will be used to see if users know how the highscores work and if they find them usefull and easy to navigate.
6. Conculsion after playing 5 times  
After a few games the player might still play it, that is the scenario we will be testing here. We can check if they got better at it with the highscores, and if they are still interested in the app. Are there enough different challanges and is the app not beginning to look boring?

## 3 Results

### 3.1 While testing

1. Britt van Veggel  
Britt first had to describe what she saw and if she liked it or not. Her first reaction was positive, she liked the little animations and the simple layout. She noted, however, that after a while the constantly turning and bouncing smileys would start to irritate her.

After this she just started playing right away, she didn't read the tutorial first and she understood the game right away. She noted that she finds the app nice with colors and subtile, and that the game is very simple. She also said that she watched the presentation about the game so she already knew a bit about it.

The highscores were nice and simple she said, and worked good. The only thing she didn't like about the highscores was that you had to re-enter your name every time you had a highscore. After playing a few games she said that she would probably play it for a few days and then delete it. There are not different difficulties or achievements and after a while it would probably get boring. She also noticed that the turning smileys on the homescreen were really making her nervous.

2. Nikki Jaspers  
Nikki liked the initial interface, she said it looked nice 'with the moving smileys and stuff'.

Nikki liked the text in the tutorial, but it was a bit cryptic and it didn't

tell how the game really works so it wasn't very helpful. She did like the highscore function and it made it more competitive according to her. The only disadvantage with the highscores was that it wasn't really clear when you could enter your highscore. Sometimes it didn't ask for a name for the highscores and sometimes it did, but you didn't have to be first.

After a few games she told us she liked the game and would keep playing it. It wasn't really clear why there was a timer in the app. She said she did like the sound effects, they were a nice addition.

### 3. Lars Ran

Lars' first impression was good, he liked the simple interface but he thought the buttons could be done nicer. They have a bit of a gray color and different sizes which doesn't look really uniform.

Lars noticed in his first game that the smileys appeared to be spawning on the same spot every time in a grid, it wasn't at random locations. He did notice that the tutorial is unnecessary and he understood the game right away. He said the game would probably get boring, he thought they would make a kind of piano tile game, that the smileys would be scrolling down all the time so you had to react faster. There is not a lot of change in gameplay, he also noticed that the wrong smileys stayed on the screen very long.

When adding a highscore Lars named his highscore 'laaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaarssssss', when looking through the highscores we noticed that the score fell off the screen with such a long name, this is a little bug that should probably be fixed.

After a few games he thought the game was nice but a bit monotone. He liked it however and it did what it did good.

### 4. Frank van Hoof

Frank liked the initial interface, but he thought it could have been nicer if they made the buttons the same length and the smileys were static. Frank wasn't allowed to read the tutorial.

The first game went really well and Frank noticed that the game was very easy to understand and you didn't really have to read the tutorial. After the first game he did read it and he told us that it didn't tell him anything he did not know. After playing a few games he said he liked the game but there are some things that could be done better, like making the smileys spawn at random locations instead of a fixed grid. He also noticed that the negative smileys stayed very long, just like Lars.

The highscores were a nice feature according to Frank, he said there was nothing wrong with it and that it looked good. He did say that it would

probably be nicer to share highscores with friends or online highscores where you could also see your friends highscores.

### 3.2 Recall interview

1. Britt van Veggel  
In the recall interview she told us that she didn't notice the game getting faster, the game does however get faster the further you are in the game. So this is probably not fast enough for her. She also noticed that she might not be in the target audience, it is probably more targeted to kids. She also said that it is maybe a bit inconvenient that you have to re enter your name every time you get a highscore, it would probably be better to give an option to use the last used name.
2. Nikki Jaspers  
Nikki told us that the smileys should probably disappear a little faster, the rest was okay according to her and she liked the game alot.
3. Lars Ran  
We did not have alot of problems with lars in the recall interview, he said again that he liked the game but it was just a bit monotone. It might have been nice to change the difficulty of the game, this could be done in alot of ways. There could be a harder mode where the game is faster initially and the smileys disappear faster. He also mentioned the higscore problem with long strings again and said that this needs fixing.
4. Frank van Hoof  
Frank didn't have alot to add in the recall interview, he just told us that the smileys could maybe be spawn at different locations instead of a fixed grid. He did mention he liked the highscore function and the game itself.

## 4 Conclusion

The conclusion in terms of the test objectives is that the app was really nice for first time users, the interface was clear and simple. It could have been a bit nicer looking with buttons which are the same size and the animations could get a bit on your nerves.

We noticed that our test persons with free choice never chose to read the tutorial first, and that nobody who didn't read the tutorial had any problems with understanding the game. The one test person who did read the tutorial first said it didn't help alot. Our conclusion with this game the tutorial is nicely added but not really needed. The rules itself didn't really state the rules, it was just a nice story about happiness. Maybe with these kind of apps it is better to just show a little tutorial when the app is started for the first time.

The highscores are a nicely added feature and really give that extra competitive dimension. The test persons liked it and it is a good feature.

After playing for a while, for our test persons 5 times, the game might get a bit boring. This did differ with different persons. Some might get addicted to it and some might not. These kind of apps are simple and easy and will always have a market. The app did what it had to do and it was for some people addictive.

## 5 Discussion & future development

There are always things that could be done better. For this app, we made a small list with things that were noted by test persons and what could maybe be improved.

1. Pre-determined grid for smileys.  
This could possibly be done with a random place the smiley can spawn.
2. Negative smileys stay on the screen for very long.  
This might be better to make shorter over time in the game, but almost all test persons noted that they stayed for very long and it was a bit confusing.
3. More practical tutorial.  
The game itself is very clear and easy, but if someone doesn't understand it the tutorial isn't very helpful. This could be improved with a clear set of rules or a guide with positive and negative smileys.
4. When do you have a highscore and long strings  
When you enter a very long name the highscore isn't visible, this should be fixed. For the rest the highscores were nice but it wasn't clear when you could enter your score. You didn't have to have the top score but sometimes you were not able to enter it at all.
5. Local highscore  
Maybe there could be more integration with social network (Google Games) to share highscores, this could make the game more competitive amongst friends.
6. Re-entering name in highscores  
It might be nice to have an option to use the last used name for the highscores, now you had to re-enter your name every time.
7. Different difficulties  
The test persons noticed that it was a bit boring after a while and a different difficulty setting might fix this.

Of course there are also a lot of positive points discussed above and in the conclusion, but these are some of the tips for future development as a conclusion.