

Adolescents' preferences in developing a UK online dietary assessment tool (myfood24): focus group study

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Measuring adolescents' dietary intake is challenging and prone to reporting error. Adolescents are less interested, less motivated and less cooperative than those in other age groups, and they find recording their dietary intake irritating and tedious^(1, 2). However, adolescents are the most eager in terms of adopting new technology⁽³⁾. Therefore, novel approaches using new technology may keep adolescents more engaged and would greatly improve the accuracy of dietary records. Limited research has been carried out to understand adolescents' needs and desires in relation to dietary assessment websites. This study aims to identify adolescents' preferences and ideas relating to the interface design of myfood24, and to determine adolescents' desired elements of different aspects of the online dietary assessments tool, such as food searching and food portion size.

In order to explore adolescents' preference in myfood24, four focus-groups were conducted among 11 to 18 year old adolescents (n 29). Each focus group contained 6 to 8 adolescents (boys and girls) in a school setting and lasted 75 minutes. To maximize the study's validity a self-reported preference questionnaire, using a 5-point likert scale and open questions, was also completed by each individual involved in the focus-group. This was in order to prove statements made in each group and to allow for individual responses. The analysis of all focus-group transcripts followed the Krueger and Casey's⁽⁴⁾ method. Table 1 presents a list of key-points that emerged from the discussions. When using a gender scheme to investigate website preferences, girls were more interested in the website's visual appeal than boys. Some girls said they would prefer it if there was a statement to confirm that they will not be judged by their eating habits. In conclusion, considering adolescents' desires is essential to enhance myfood24 users' satisfaction as well as the accuracy of adolescents' dietary records.

Table 1 Adolescents' preferences in developing a UK online dietary assessment tool (myfood24)

Website feature	Preferable features	Un-preferable features
General design and layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplicity and ease of use - Clear options and colourful - Using light signs would be useful to draw their attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page did not load up quickly - Too much information to read - Words pop up - Childish design with lots of colour
Type of help they would like to have in tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance between text and object - Steps on how to use the tool - Video tutorial at the beginning - Avatar (young adolescents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading through a lot of information - They will not watch the video if it is not short or attractive - There is no general agreement on a specific method
Food searching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combination of keyword and category - Added styles of food (Indian, Italian) in food category - Organize results in alphabetical order - Use auto-fill and spell checker 	
Food portion size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having different options to select from - Clock face food pictures were more preferred than sequential food pictures - Add food's weight under the picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weighing their food - Using household objects
Time slot/entering diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School day structure/Meal slot - Entering by the end of the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entering eating times - Spend more than 15 minutes
Reward preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving money (older adolescents/boy) - Voucher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Downloading music

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4. Krueger RA & Casey MA (2009). Pine Forge Press.