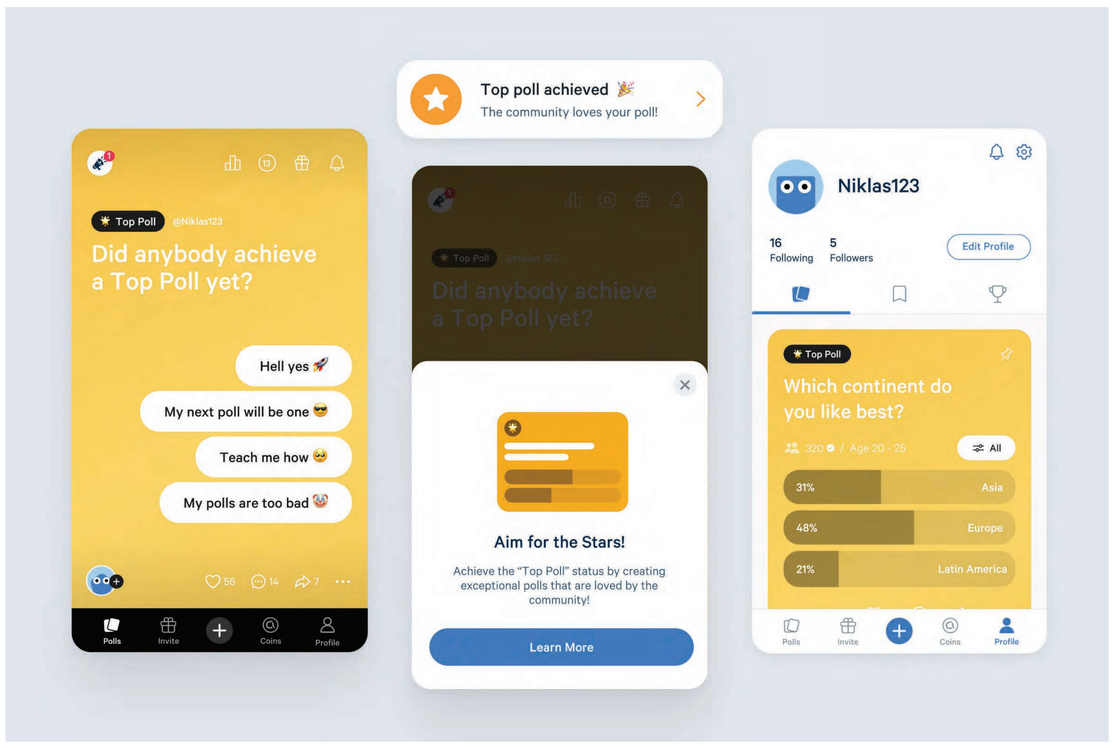
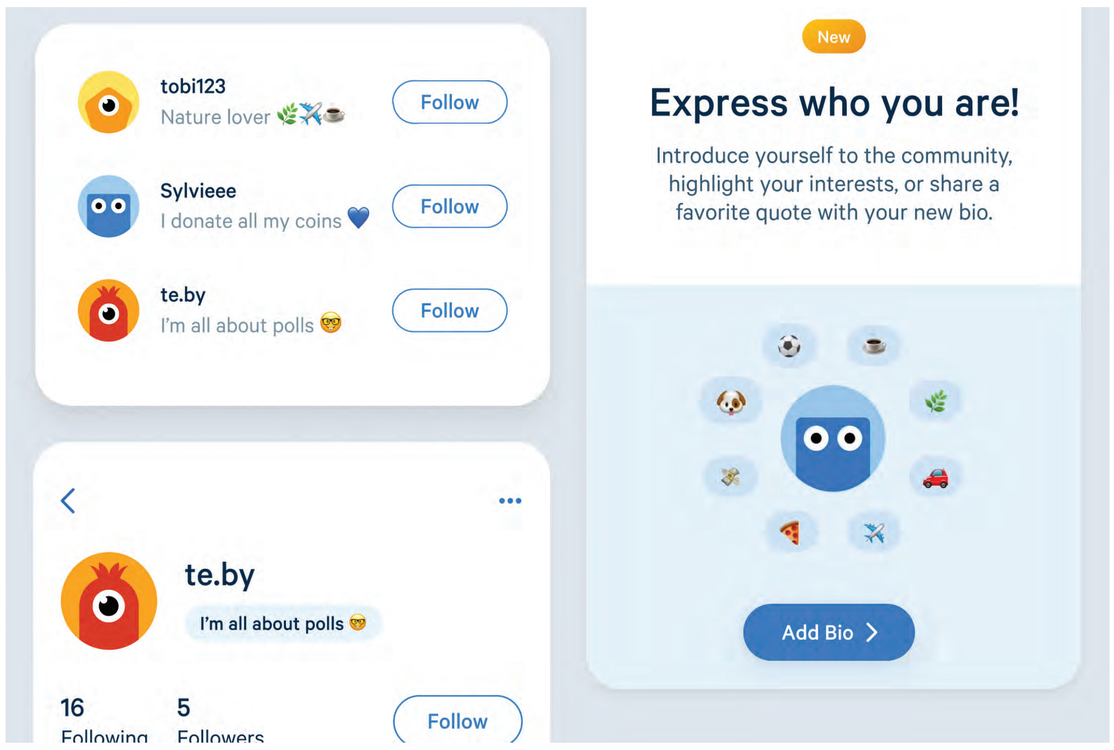
Niklas Luther

Master Thesis 2023

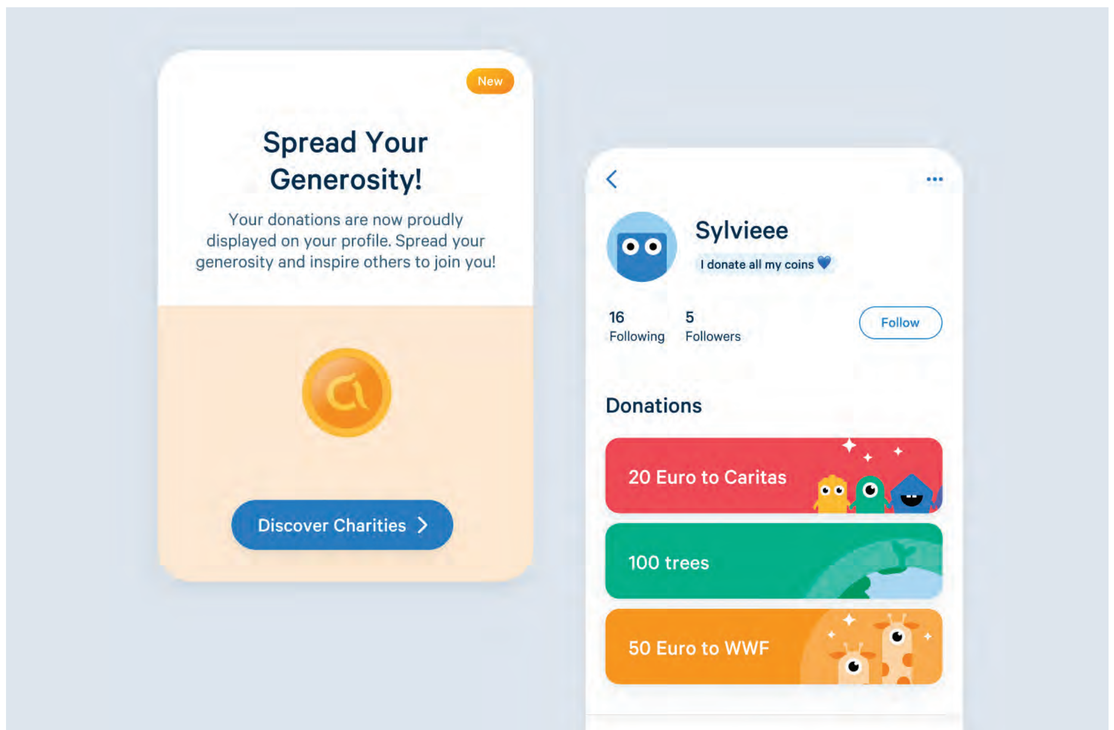
The impact of social status mechanics on daily usage and community metrics in the Appinio app



Top Poll feature



Profile bio feature



Public charity donation feature

Abstract

The primary objective of this master thesis is to measure the impact of implementing social status mechanics on daily usage and community metrics within the opinion app "Appinio".

To achieve this goal, a modified version of the user-centered design thinking approach is used, providing an agile methodology for the project. After extensive research on the topic of social status, three innovative features were conceptualized, designed, and implemented into the app. These features include showcasing popular community polls as Top Polls, enhancing the value of user profiles through personalized bios, and publicly displaying charity donations on user profiles.

Ultimately, a combination of data-driven quantitative testing and user-centered qualitative testing methods were utilized to assess the impact of these features in detail.

Special Focus

The special focus of this thesis revolved around the data-driven A/B test, which was conducted with 50% of Appinio's global user base over a four-week period. The testing approach allowed for extensive data collection on the test groups app usage and community interactions, compared to the control group without access to the new features. This way, it was possible to validate the following three hypotheses:

1. The natural human desire for social status leads to above-average community interest in the new features
2. Social status mechanics improve daily usage metrics.
3. Social status mechanics improve community metrics.

At the end of the A/B test, a qualitative survey was distributed to the test group to gather additional, more personal insights on the questions that can't be answered through quantitative data. Through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the overall validity and reliability of the testing insights were enhanced.

Result and Future Work

In summary, the testing could successfully validate all three hypotheses. The first one was confirmed through measured above-average interest of the community towards the new features and positive qualitative feedback. The second hypothesis was validated through clear improvements of all daily usage metrics in the test group, including app retention, session count, and session length. Furthermore, the positive impact of the new features on the test group's community metrics, such as content creation, content interactions, following behavior, and charitable contributions, validated the third hypothesis.

Overall, the thesis underscores the potential of incorporating social status mechanics into a community-based social app, while also highlighting the responsibility of working with such mechanics. The testing also identified minor issues, such as suboptimal user flows or a lack of feature promotion, which should be addressed in future iterations.

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