

Technology, Health, and the Capabilities Approach: The Ethics of Dietary Apps

Shashu Sharma*

Department of Health science, Harvard University, United States

Corresponding author: Shashu Sharma

✉ ShashuSharma34@gmail.com

Department of Health science, Harvard University, United States

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Abstract

Nutritional applications are believed to encourage improved eating practises, enhance dietary knowledge, and increase nutritional awareness. However, their use has also brought up a number of moral and social concerns about how they affect individual freedoms, how they create power imbalances, how they prevent end users from learning more about health, how they coerce people, and even how they can have negative effects on people's health. This essay will examine some of the most frequent concerns levelled towards dietary apps using the capabilities approach methodology to determine what steps should be implemented to preserve people's rights and ensure their health. Dietary applications democratise nutritional knowledge, but they must be created and used in a way that is morally acceptable and considerate of users' individual, societal, and environmental preferences. This essay will show that, while some forms of nudging within dietary applications are appropriate, app developers shouldn't push people in ways that are agency-infringing, coercive, or forceful for their own economic benefit. Overall, this article will present a user-centric technique to show how food technologies should take the end-user into account while they are being developed and used.

Keywords: The Capability Approach; Technology Ethics; Health Ethics; Dietary Apps; Freedom; Nutrition

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Introduction

Apps that offer recommendations and record our life are becoming more and more popular and used [1]. There are applications that zip and unzip clothes, ones that display an electric razor on your screen so you can pretend to be shaving, ones that show the optimal time to pee during a movie with the appropriately named RunPee, and even one that offers nothing more but a blank screen. Apps are available for almost everything [2]. Health-related applications continue to be the most widely used categories of apps, with thousands of apps in the areas of fitness and nutrition available on Google Play and the Apple Store [3]. The use of health applications falls under one of the most well-liked subcategories of apps for tracking dietary habits or "dietary apps" Nutritional apps come in a wide range of tasks, target markets, suggestions, and user interfaces [4]. While some mix food and eating habits with other aspects of health, such exercise regimens, stress management techniques, or mindfulness, the majority do not. Nutritional apps typically

work to encourage healthier eating patterns, increase dietary knowledge, and raise nutrition awareness [5]. Yet, they have also drawn criticism for limiting our freedom of choice, creating power imbalances, preventing people from learning more about health, and generally harming users [6]. In order to evaluate the merits of dietary apps and suggest improvements, this paper will look at some of the critiques levelled at them [7]. This In order to establish how ethical dietary apps are, potential problems or effects of using them, and how they may be made to respect people's beliefs and freedoms, this study will examine dietary apps utilising the capabilities approach as a methodology [8]. I'll start by providing a general summary of what dietary apps are, why they exist, and how they typically operate. There will be a definition of health and good living after this [9].

Discussion

This section will describe the capability approach, which was used in this work to analyse dietary apps [10]. Part 5 presents the findings of the capabilities approach's analysis of dietary apps and

how it addresses some of the most common critiques levelled at them [11]. The ability for the end-user to enter information about their diet unites most dietary applications despite the fact that they serve a range of purposes [12]. It enables users to monitor their diet [13]. Some apps offer dietary suggestions, while others let the user fill in the blanks on their own. Several applications offer meal menus and recipes, ingredient and nutritional information for food items, or the number of "points" in each category [14]. A food or a food item Nonetheless, keeping an eye on one's eating patterns and nutrient intake is not a recent development [15]. For a long time, people have kept written records of their diets. There have been organisations dedicated to weight loss for a long time. The popularity of diet apps is a result of how crucial healthy eating, calorie restriction, and weight loss are to people's daily lives. For people to monitor their diets and reach their objectives, food tracking is useful. Self-monitoring raises self-awareness in connection to focusing behaviour and results in respect to dietary objectives. It can also serve as an early warning system, alerting people if their risk of getting overweight is rising. One's nutrition is digitalized by apps, and they can also retrieve a variety of facts about the user and offer recommendations that are more specifically customised. Nutritional apps frequently offer a more practical, amusing, and thorough way to keep track of one's diet than a straightforward food journal. Regarding one's diet, they offer graphs, diagrams, data, and recommendations. Dietary apps are used by people to learn intriguing facts about themselves, to create objectives, and for the sense of community they foster among users. Several people utilise these applications to become healthy. Nutritional applications are believed to encourage improved eating practises, enhance dietary knowledge, and increase nutritional awareness. However, their use has also brought up a number of moral and social concerns about how they affect individual freedoms, how they create power imbalances, how they prevent end users from learning more about health, how they coerce people, and even how they can have negative effects on people's health. This essay will examine some of the most frequent concerns levelled towards dietary apps using the capabilities approach methodology to determine what steps should be implemented to preserve people's rights and ensure their health. Dietary applications democratise nutritional knowledge, but they must be created and used in a way that is morally acceptable and considerate of users' individual, societal, and environmental preferences.

Conclusion

In order to show how food technologies should incorporate and take into account the end-user in their development and use, this paper will show that while some forms of nudging within dietary apps are acceptable because they are frequently used as a kind of "extended will"), app companies should not nudge people in

agency-infringing, manipulative, or forceful ways. Apps that offer recommendations and record our life are becoming more and more popular and used. There are applications that zip and unzip jeans (Zips Lite), apps that show an electric razor on your screen so you can pretend to be shaving and even an app that offers nothing else but a blank screen. Apps are available for almost everything. Health-related applications continue to be the most widely used categories of apps, with thousands of apps in the areas of fitness and nutrition available on Google Play and the Apple Store. One of the most well-liked divisions of health applications is the use of "dietary apps" for dietary behaviour and trends Nutritional apps come in a wide range of tasks, target markets, suggestions, and user interfaces. While some mix food and eating habits with other aspects of health, such exercise regimens, stress management techniques, or mindfulness, the majority do not. Nutritional apps typically work to encourage healthier eating patterns, increase dietary knowledge, and raise nutrition awareness. Yet, they have also come under investigation for inhibiting our ability to select; power asymmetries; constraining individuals from growing their understanding of health; and generally, have a deleterious effect on users. This essay will examine some of the concerns levelled towards dietary apps in order to determine their value and possible solutions. Make these apps better. In order to establish how ethical dietary apps are, potential problems or effects of using them, and how they may be made to respect people's beliefs and freedoms, this study will examine dietary apps utilising the capabilities approach as a methodology. I'll start by providing a general summary of what dietary apps are, why they exist, and how they typically operate. A definition of good health and nutritious eating will come after this. The capability approach, which was used in this work to analyse dietary applications, will be described in Section 4 of the paper. Part 5 presents the findings of the capabilities approach's analysis of dietary apps and how it addresses some of the most common critiques levelled at them. The ability for the end-user to enter information about their diet unites most dietary applications despite the fact that they serve a range of purposes. It enables users to monitor their diet. Some apps offer dietary suggestions, while others let the user fill in the blanks on their own. Some apps provide food menus and recipes, lists of ingredients and nutritional benefits of food products, or how many 'points' are in each type of food or food product. Overall, these dietary applications offer a wide range of diverse features.

Acknowledgement

None

Conflict of Interest

None

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