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Technology, Health, and the Capability Approach by the Ethics of Dietary Apps

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Abstract

Dietary 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 actions should be implemented to preserve people's rights and maintain their health. Dietary applications democratise nutritional knowledge, but they must be created and utilised in a way that is morally acceptable and considerate of users' individual, societal, and environmental preferences. Factors of conversion this essay will show that although some forms of nudging inside dietary apps are allowed since they are frequently employed as a "extended will," app developers shouldn't push people in agency-infringing, coercive, or aggressive methods for their own financial gain. This article will give a user-centric technique (the capacity approach) to show how food technologies should take the end-user into account while developing and utilising them [1]. Apps that offer suggestions and record our life are becoming more and more popular and used.

Keywords: The capability approach; Technology ethics; Health ethics; Dietary apps

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Introduction

There are applications that show an electric razor on your screen so you can pretend to be shaving, apps that show the optimal moment to pee during a movie aptly named RunPee, and apps that can help you avoid dating your cousin in Iceland [2]. While shaving Apps for electric shavers that let you zip and unzip jeans Zips Late and even an app that offers nothing but a blank screen as its only feature anything [3]. Apps are available for almost anything. However, health-related applications continue to be the most widely used categories of apps, with thousands of them available on Google Play and the Apple Store in the categories of exercise and nutrition. Dietary applications, such as Lose It! Fat Secret's Calorie Counter, Spark People, Foodscape, Restaurant Nutrition, Meal Snap, Food Scanner, and Healthy Out, are one of the most well-liked subcategories of health apps [3]. Dietary applications come in a wide range of tasks, target markets, suggestions, and user interfaces. Whilst others are merged the majority of health characteristics, such as exercise regimens, techniques for reducing stress, or mindfulness, only concentrate on nutrition and eating patterns [4]. Dietary applications usually work to encourage healthier eating patterns, increase dietary knowledge, and raise nutrition awareness [5]. However, 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 study will look at some of the critiques levelled at them [7].

Discussion

In order to assess the ethics of dietary apps, potential drawbacks or effects of using them, and prospective design possibilities, this study will investigate dietary apps using the capacity approach as

a methodology [8]. To regard each person's values and liberties. I'll start by providing an overview of dietary apps, including what they are, why they exist, and the typical tasks they do [9]. 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 article [10]. Section 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. Some apps offer suggestions for what should eat, while others let the user fill up these gaps on their own. Some applications include food menus and recipes, component lists, nutritional information about food items, or information about how many "points" are contained in each type of food or food product (you are only allowed a specific number of "points" each day [13]. Overall, these dietary apps offer a huge variety of services [14]. But keeping an eye on one's eating patterns and nutrient intake is nothing new. For quite some time, people have been keeping a written record of their diets [15]. Weight Watchers has been in existence since there have long been weight loss clubs, affiliations, and programmes. The popularity of dietary apps is due to the ease of reducing weight, exercising, and following a healthy diet. Such a crucial element in people's lives. For people to monitor their diets and achieve their objectives, food tracking is useful. 'Self-monitoring raises self-awareness in terms of focusing behaviour and results in connection to dietary objectives. It can also serve as an early warning system, alerting people if their risk of getting overweight is rising. Given the vast range of opinions on dietary apps, it is also important to consider the population that uses or might use them. For instance, if it led to decreased health insurance rates,, indicated they would use a fitness-tracking app. Young adults and people from higher-earning households tended to use fitness and nutritional apps more frequently. According to a different study, there is a difference between age brackets and their interest in using diet applications. Older age groups are less likely to use them, although many of them indicated that they would be open to trying, and a sizable portion indicated that they would prefer not to use them at all. Dietary applications support users in maintaining their diets and frequently boost motivation. conducted a survey with 217 users of diet and nutrition apps, and the majority strongly agreed that the apps improved their self-efficacy, desire to set and achieve healthy diet goals, and motivation to eat well. The majority of participants firmly believed that using diet/nutrition apps caused them to change their behavior, specifically an increase in their actual goal-setting for eating a healthy diet. Their consumption of nutritious foods both rises in frequency and consistency. Overall, it has been demonstrated that using diet apps helps consumers stick to their healthy eating routines. Dietary applications aim to promote healthy eating habits, but this goal is fraught with ethical dilemmas and is beset by controversies about how to define diet, nutrition, and health. Therefore, before examining the effects of dietary apps on people, it is crucial to define health and good eating. Apps digitalize a person's diet and offer spreadsheets, graphs, and visual representations of their behaviour. They can also gather a variety of facts about the user and offer recommendations that are more specifically customised. Dietary apps frequently provide a more practical, amusing, and thorough method to record one's diet than a food journal. easy eating log. Regarding one's diet, they offer graphs, infographics, data, and advice.

Conclusion

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. Many people use these applications to improve their health, lose/gain/stabilize their weight, or ensure that their diet has a better balance of different food groups and nutrients. Added features encourage users to interact with and use these applications more. For instance, a recent study found that the implementation of usage awareness functionalities, such as reminders, usage trackers, notifications, progress trackers, and visual representations, has a positive impact on users' acceptance of wellbeing applications. The majority of individuals, if not everyone, strive for health. Whenever we discuss health, it the majority of people undoubtedly understand what we're talking about. Health is often described in terms like "feeling well," "free from sickness," and "performing properly." In practise, it might be more difficult to define health accurately and to set metrics, criteria, and benchmarks for it. Since there are so many different disagreements on the definition, appropriate application, and best ways to show health, it is sometimes categorised as a fundamentally disputed concept. While not attempting to settle the conflicting viewpoints within the health debate, this section does strive to give a general overview of health for the purposes of this study. Dietary applications seek to achieve health through a nutritious diet. Consequently, it is crucial to comprehend what is meant by health, before examining the effect of dietary applications on the user. To start, the World Health Organization (WHO) is responsible for one of the most popular and well-known definitions of health: In contrast to just being free from illness or disability, "health is a condition of total physical, mental, and social well-being." This concept, which strayed from the conventional definition of health being restricted to the more formulaic understanding of health in the biological sciences, was rather controversial when it was initially proposed in (as the appropriate functioning or malfunctioning of the body). The WHO believed that health should encompass a person's total well-being, including their physical, mental, and social well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

None

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