

28 Days Later: Testing 2

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Executive Summary

We did see improvement based on our changes. In particular, it helped that we changed the language of the countdown, moved sharing out of settings, and changed the appearance of the + button. We still have some issues with the icons communicating exactly what we want them to. We also have some lingering issues with symptom logging. The prototype medium continues to be a source of confusion for some users — in addition, since we had less direct control over the interface, technical usability issues have started to surface.

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1 Testing Protocol

We used the four tasks from the previous round of testing, which were as follows:

1. You are at the doctor's office and need to give them the date of your last period. Use the app to find when your last period started.
2. When will your next period start?
3. You are experiencing mild cramps. Use the app to log this symptom.
4. Share your data with your "Blood Buddies".

In addition, we asked follow-up questions to gauge the user's subjective experience with the app.

1. Was anything particularly confusing?
2. Was there anything the app did well?

Testers initially used the app on a phone, but battery and resizing issues forced us to move to a computer.

2 Usability Problems

2.1 Arrows not tappable

Found by: Tester #3

Severity: high; prevents users from using a key feature

Description: Especially when on a mouse and keyboard, the arrows on the symptom zombies appear to be individually clickable.

2.2 Signposting "record saved"

Found by: Tester #3

Severity: moderate; likely resolvable in less pressured settings

Description: The forecast/record interface did not clearly indicate when user input had been saved. This flaw was masked in the paper prototype because it was very explicit when we switched "forecast" to "record". In the digital prototype, it was less clear that something had changed.

2.3 Record/forecast appear clickable

Found by: Tester #3, #4, #5

Severity: low; slightly an artifact of the Axure interface

Description: The forecast/record toggle appeared to be a button rather than feedback text.

2.4 Custom text entry still looks like search

Found by: Tester #3

Severity: moderate; has low impact, but confuses a lot of people

Description: Even with the watermark text, the text entry box still reads as more of a query box than a diary box.

2.5 Lack of granularity

Found by: Tester #4

Severity: moderate; seems to have some level of personal preference in it

Description: The 3-point scale seemed lacking; tester was expecting at least a 5-point intensity scale.

2.6 Lack of clear intensity

Found by: Tester #4 and #5

Severity: moderate; problematic for new users, less of a problem over time

Description: Testers had difficulty telling where in the scale they were when looking only at images. One tester suggested adding a bar on the side of the images to unambiguously convey intensity (while keeping the image as the main focus).

2.7 Lack of clear symptoms

Found by: Tester #4

Severity: low; this is also more of a problem for new users

Description: The zombie images did not always correlate with people's ideas of what symptoms should look like. The cleaver zombie was especially befuddling — all other zombies suffered from the symptom they represented, rather than inflicting it.

2.8 Add symptom difficult to find

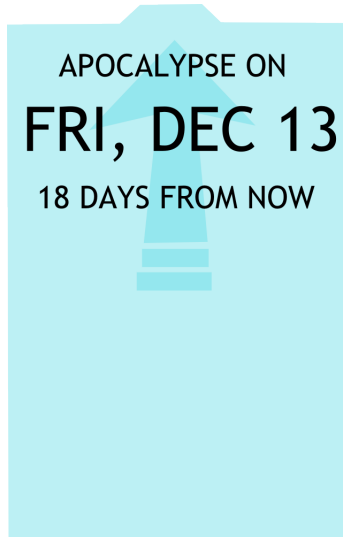
Found by: Tester #5

Severity: low; “add symptom” is a power-user feature, so it shouldn't be too easy to find

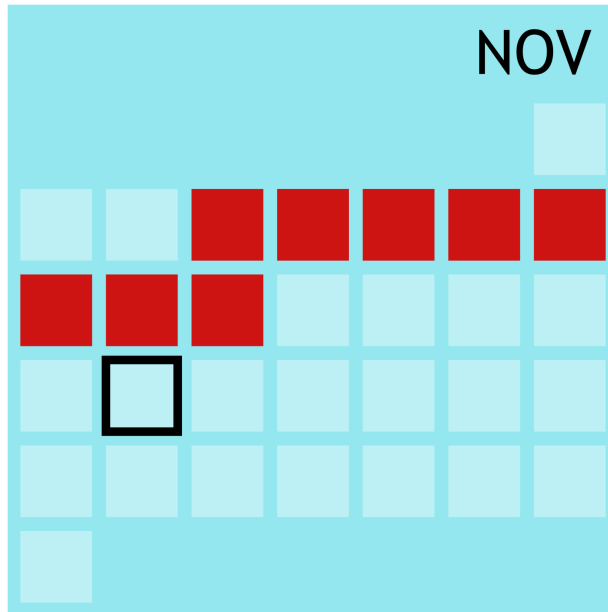
Description: The tester had difficulty finding the “add symptom” button, since it required scrolling to find. On a full mobile app, it would be easier to make a discoverable scrollable area (touching the area in any way causes it to shift). In Axure, it comes down to putting in an arrow button, which must be explicitly tapped to scroll.

3 Subjective Feedback

Users found it relatively easy to predict their next period, unlike with the previous prototype. The change in countdown wording really helped.



In this round, all the testers seemed surprised when we asked them to do task 2; as one tester said, it “tells me right there”. This was a huge improvement over the previous round. One even mentioned preferring the countdown indicator to the calendar. The cleaner calendar design made it easier overall for users to interpret which day was today, and when their period had started.



Another iteration could benefit from adding numbers to the calendar.

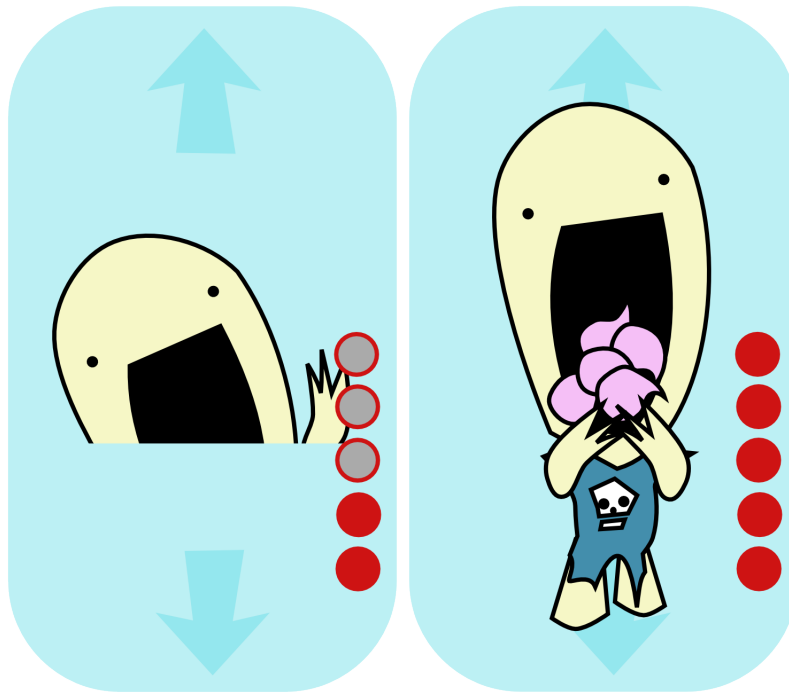
Sharing also benefited from the iteration, and testers found it easier to interpret this time around.

As before, testers liked the zombie theme.

4 Proposed Design Changes

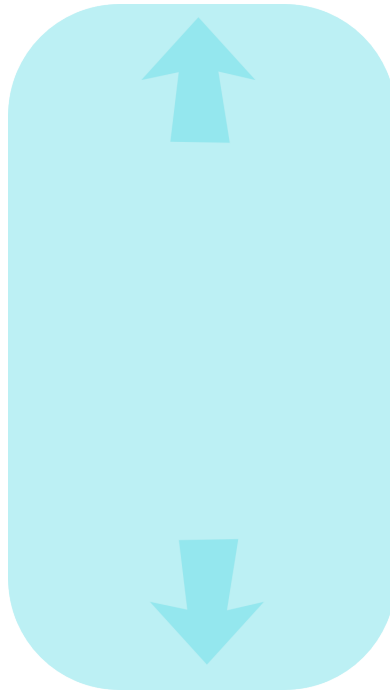
4.1 Clarity and granularity

Testers remarked that symptoms lacked the granularity they wanted, having only 3 severity steps. They also noted that it was difficult to tell which intensity they were on at a glance. Therefore, we should add more gradations and denote the current gradation as well.



4.2 Arrow ambiguity

The arrows helped overall, but we need to either (1) style them differently, to show that they can be swiped rather than individually tapped or (2) allow the arrows to be individually tapped. The first aspect can be addressed by making arrows subtle background elements and by giving them tails. The second aspect is a technical issue.

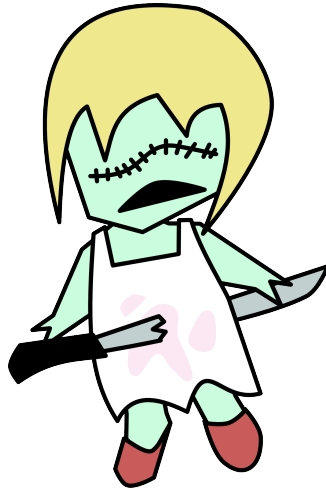


4.3 Symptom ambiguity

A tester remarked that the cleaver zombie didn't accurately convey pain. "She looks like she's going to kill someone".

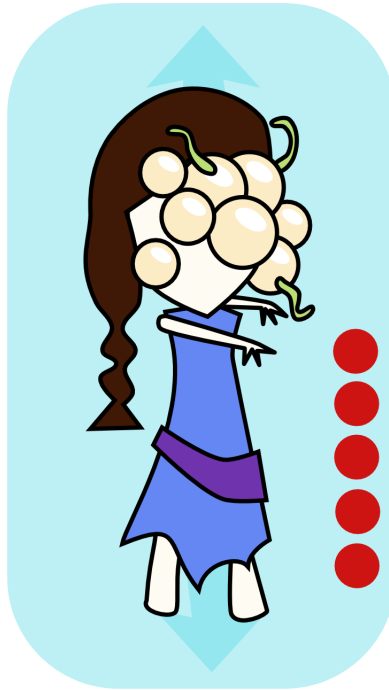


We can fix this by sticking a machete through the zombie's stomach instead of having it hold a cleaver.



4.4 Aesthetic improvements

We also got remarks that the zombies could be more colorful. We've since discovered that just adding a colored background makes the zombies pop.

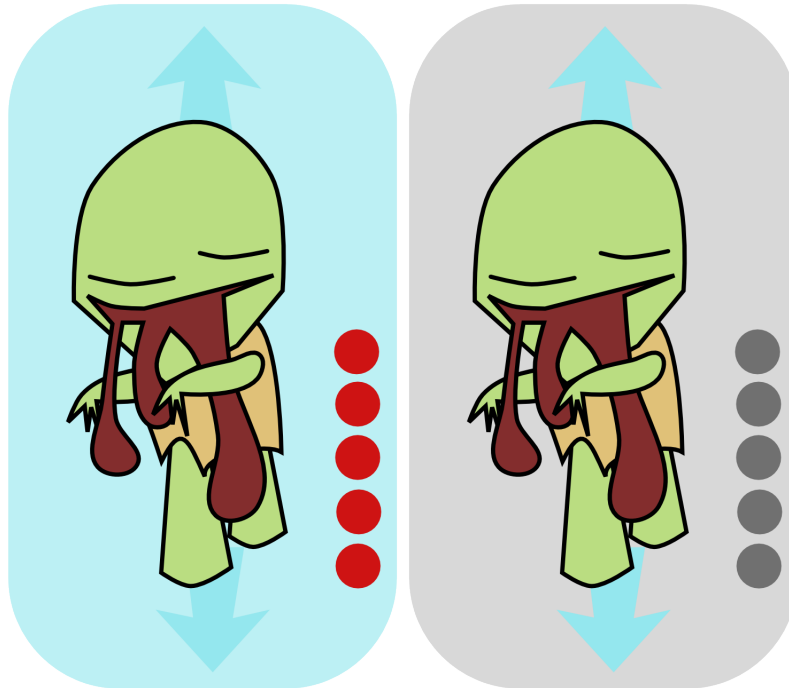


4.5 Text entry

Even with watermark text, the text box remains a source of confusion. Maybe it seems like a search box because the wording is too formal? Something more casual, such as “Notes for myself” or “Extra notes” might better convey its purpose.

4.6 Feedback

It would be useful to give a clearer indication that the user has modified the forecast. In addition to the forecast/record text, we might consider changing the color of the zombies' backdrops when they are modified.



5 Contribution Report

Toni and Mia did the testing. Janeen and Skatje compiled the notes into this report, and drew concept art for the proposed changes. We all contributed to proposed changes.