Development of Decision support system for connected washing machine

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Background

Customer feedback gathered over the years.

One program is used for all the washes. Washes mixed laundry without segregation
1400 RPM – Numbers are Scary No Knowledge on how it effects wash quality
60 °C used for Jeans Wool program used for rough Cloths

Most users find it difficult to choose program, temperature, spin speed and other options.

Solution: Develop a user friendly interactive system that will help users select appropriate programs in case of uncertainty.

Opportunity:
Once the machine is connected with Bluetooth we get access to faster hardware, touch screen, internet etc. through the smart phone
This idea was transcended to Android and iOS app that was used for controlling IFB Senorita Smart Washing machine.
Brief Introduction

- The IFB group celebrates over four decades of technical excellence, leading technology solutions that have touched people's lives.
- IFB launched first connected washing machine that can connect with Smartphone via Bluetooth.

1989 – India’s First Front loader washing machine
2002 – India’s First Digital washing machine
2013 – India’s First Connected washing machine
Rule Based System or Expert System is a computer program that solves problems within a specialized domain that ordinarily requires human expertise.

We decided to capture the reasoning of R&D Engineer (Expert), who designed the wash programs and use it to suggest appropriate programs for user operating the washing machine.
Algorithm design approach

- Decision trees are known for mirroring human decision making more closely than other approaches. This way experts can validate the algorithm as it is easily interpretable.
- However, since the query and response in our use cases were fuzzy in nature, we preferred fuzzy inference engine for classification.
Challenges

Challenge was to integrate user-centered UI design with the design of Inference Engine from the concept phase unto the final product

Limitations

▪ The design of the knowledge base depended solely on the domain expertise.
▪ If the user interface relays inappropriate interpretation of user query, then the rest of the system cannot give suitable suggestion.
Tools Used

- GUI
- MATLAB
- Fuzzy Logic Designer

Interview with domain expert
Tools Used

- Fuzzy logic designer allowed domain expert to understand and validate the rules and the responses very quickly.
Tools Used

- Desktop prototype for concept validation
- Functional prototype to refine algorithm
- Platform for Algorithm validation
- Template for verifying the app

MATLAB GUI

+ Fuzzy Logic Designer
Summary

- The concept prototype on the MATLAB was used for initial usability testing with potential users.
- This helped in identifying critical UI elements that could affect the performance of decision support system.
- The refined fuzzy inference system developed in MATLAB was used as standard for the mobile app development.

Customer response for the app:

“Nice app allows you to see machine's current running program state and remaining time. Flexible to customize programs according to our washing needs.”

“We can use it for special clothes, which should not get damaged.”

“the app feels like it is designed for me.”

“I didn’t use the application yet before. Now I will use this application. Highlight is machine prescribes the program according to the clothes type and dirt level.”
Thank you.