

DESIGNING TO SUPPORT WELLBEING THROUGH ENHANCED EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS

matthew.barker@open.ac.uk

Matthew Barker, Pro. Janet van der Linden, Dr Daniel Gooch, Prof. Marian Petre



DESIGN PROBLEM

In Psychology research, individuals who report higher levels of emotional self-awareness have been found to also report higher levels of subjective wellbeing [1]. Accordingly, technologies for self-reporting emotional states may be able to promote wellbeing by enhancing their user's self-awareness. HCI and Psychology research has indicated, however, that if they are to bring about this positive affect, technologies must fulfill certain criteria:

- Encourage moments of emotional insight but discourage rumination [1]
- Not constrain users with pre-defined categories for describing their emotional experiences [2]
- Make self-monitoring fun and engaging so it becomes habitual [3]

As part of our PHD research on HCI, Emotional intelligence and Mental wellbeing, we have designed *SpriteCatcher*; a tangible, self-report device that addresses the design problem by encouraging the user to: *Grasp their Emotions*, *Own their Emotions* and *Engage with their Emotions*:

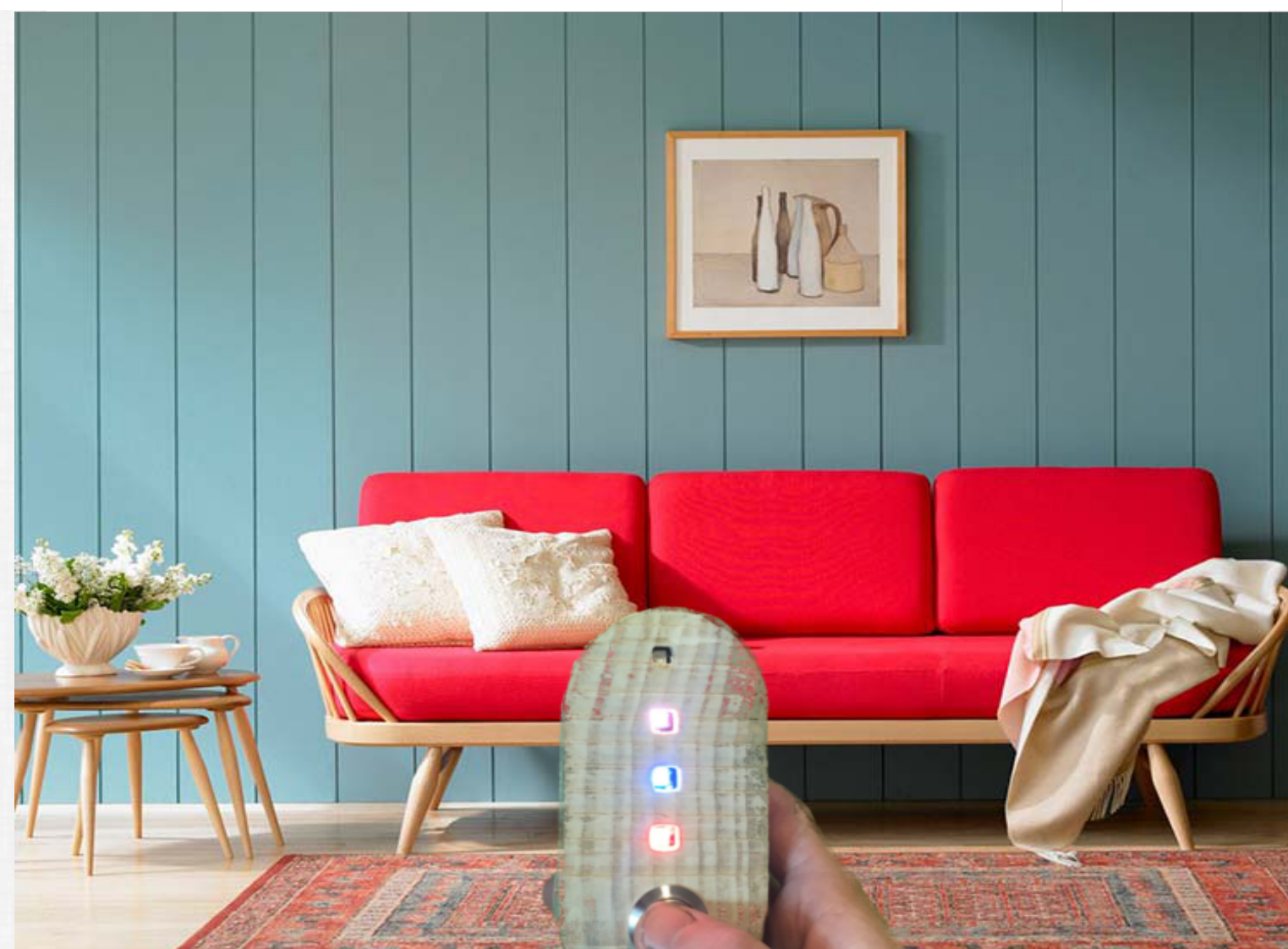


HOW SPRITECATCHER WORKS

To record and display emotions with *SpriteCatcher*, the user holds it up to an object in their environment which has a colour that reflects how they feel, e.g. a red sofa. Then, by pressing the button on the front they capture the object's colour. It is displayed on one of the LED's, along with up to 3 other previously recorded emotions. When full, adding a new emotion, deletes the oldest existing one. Together the lit LED'S serve as a snapshot of the user's emotional state.

GRASP YOUR EMOTIONS

SpriteCatcher discourages the user from retreating into their internal world by making them physically engage with their surroundings. Additionally, as the device only displays a snapshot of their emotional state (displays max. 4 emotions), it encourages moments of self-awareness but not continuous, habitual reflection.



OWN YOUR EMOTIONS

To use *SpriteCatcher*, the user creates their own symbolic language for their emotions, by assigning colours to them. This gives them a sense of ownership and control over their emotion data, encouraging creativity and expressiveness.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR EMOTIONS

Capturing the colour of objects with *SpriteCatcher* is intended to be a fun, whimsical task, and a more pleasurable and engaging way to self-report than writing in a diary or selecting values on an app.

[1] Lyke, Jennifer A. "Insight, but not self-reflection, is related to subjective well-being." *Personality and Individual Differences* 46, no. 1 (2009)

[2] Calvo, Rafael A., and Dorian Peters. *Positive computing: technology for wellbeing and human potential*. MIT Press

[3] Lee, Kwangyoung, and Hwajung Hong. "Designing for Self-Tracking of Emotion and Experience with Tangible Modality." *DIS 17*