What's been happening in the Tech Labs?

Active2Gether – Intertain Lab

The Active2Gether project aims to develop smart coaching strategies that integrate social networks and modern technology (e.g. smartphones) to empower young people to be physically active.

The Intertain Lab was used as location for focus group discussions. The Intertain Lab offers great opportunities for recording, monitoring and creating a safe area for the focus groups discussions. It provides a relaxing and attractive atmosphere, which is very important for focus group discussions, whereby the participants have to feel comfortable.

Researchers: Danielle van der Laan, Julienka Molle, Anouk Middelweerd, Tim Velten

Back to the Future – Intertain Lab

This experiment examined the effects of movement on the processing of information. To gain a better understanding of this phenomenon the Tech Labs created a custom iPad application "Back to the Future" that was used in three different conditions. One in which users were sitting, one in which they were walking around and a third in which users were using a home trainer.

The application integrated Qualtrics surveys, custom interactions and server-based data storage.

Researchers: Christian Burgers and Guido van Koningsbruggen

Critical Response v2 – Game Cella' Lab

Excessive alcohol consumption is a major societal problem, especially in adolescence. Similarly, excessive (unhealthy) food consumption poses a major societal problem in youth. As both behaviors have addictive aspects, they are combined in this study.

Several models of addiction suggest a way to counter the development and maintenance of these addictive behaviors. This can be done by restoring the imbalance between weakened cognitive control functions and strong automatic reactions to drug-related cues.

This experiment made use of an existing custom made high-end video game environment called Critical Response (made by ICT3DMedia). In this game users stand in front of a large (3m) projection screen with a modified rifle. The rifle has a so-called laser bullet the projects a small red dot of light on the screen when the user pulls the trigger. This creates a very realistic first person shooter environment.

The Tech Labs modified the code of the game to adapt it to the specific needs for this experiment.

Researchers: Elly Konijn (VU), Wouter Boendermaker (UvA), Jolanda Veldhuis (VU), Johan Hoorn (VU)

Video games and moral reasoning – Game Cella' Lab

This Master Student experiment researched if and to what extend moral reasoning plays a role in playing video games, in this case Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2. Because the video game requires a fast computer with a strong video card, only the computers in the Game Cella' Lab were powerful enough to use in this experiment.

Researchers: Giorgio Lion Sjin Tjoe, Daryl Jie, Marina Krcmar

Social Motivation – MediaLab

Social motivation rests on the idea that individuals can be either pro-social or pro-self motivated. Pro-social individuals are usually concerned with collective welfare, joint success and strive for harmony in the group and cooperation. Pro-self individuals usually ignore others' needs, interests and beliefs as long as their own interests are satisfied. Out interest in this study was therefore to investigate how social motivation affects information sharing.

For this experiment the Tech Labs recreated part of the survey in an HTML5 web application as the Authorware original posted too many problems to post on-line. Through integrating Qualtrics, the HTML5 application and several PHP scripts, the experiment is now being done on-line.

Researcher: Nicoleta Balau