

UXkids case study:



Mybee 2.0: a Child and User friendly Online Environment for Kids

Keywords: Mybee, App, Safe online, User tests, Focus groups, Usability, UX, Children age 2-6, Parents.

For KPN it's a major concern to empower all children to surf the web responsibly and safe. In 2008, together with the foundations Mijn Kind Online and Ouders Online, KPN developed the online environment Mybee. In 2015, the decision was made to relaunch Mybee as a mobile app with a new look and feel and more content.



The Mybee logo with a new style.

KPN wanted to design the new Mybee app with a constant focus on its users to ensure the new design and functionality met the children's needs and expectations.

As expert on the user experience for children, UXkids was asked to advise KPN on the target age group and to ensure the child and user friendliness of the new Mybee app.

During the development of the app, UXkids conducted UX research with children on multiple occasions. Besides kids between 4 and 8 years of age, UXkids also involved parents of 2 and 3 year olds in the research.

"UXkids is an expert on good usability for children. Their broad knowledge on the topic and the way they involve children during the different stages of the development process are impressive.

A high degree of flexibility and patience towards both the children and the client are traits that set UXkids apart."

Richard van Laar, Product owner Mybee

UXkids conducted UX research on 4 important aspects of the app:

- 1. Logo.** During focus groups with kids, UXkids gathered feedback on a selection of different logo variants. The results were surprising.
- 2. Visual design.** During one-on-one user tests, kids responded to different visual designs. The results showed clear preferences for certain visual and interactive elements.
- 3. Usability.** A clickable prototype allowed UXkids to identify usability issues at an early stage. The results provided hands-on input for optimization.
- 4. User experience.** UXkids conducted user tests with both kids and parents to validate the overall usability and perception of the final Mybee app.

1. Logo

The new Mybee app was supposed to get not only a new look and feel, but also a new logo. KPN was convinced that the initial brand was outdated and did not appeal to children of different ages and their parents. UXkids tested the children's responses to the initial logo compared with 6 new logo variants.

Setup

In order to get a good idea of what the kids did and didn't like about the different logo variants, UXkids suggested to conduct focus groups with three different age groups. A focus group can be seen as a group discussion with 3 - 4 kids of the same age and sex. In total, 32 kids participated in this first round of research.



During focus groups, kids were asked about their thoughts on a set of different logo variants.

Based on the kids' initial reaction and findings from the group discussions, UXkids was able to select the logo variants that were most popular among the kids.

Parents were also asked to rate the different logo variants and share their thoughts in a survey.

Results

This first round of research provided a clear indication of which logo variant was appreciated the most.

Against all expectations, the initial logo variant won the race. The funny and cheerful appearance, the recognizable character and the bright and contrasting colors were appreciated by all age groups and both boys and girls. Parents also preferred the initial logo above all new variants.

What is a focus group?

Focus groups can be seen as group discussion that bring together different thoughts and ideas about a specific topic. With this creative technique, we stimulate kids to share their ideas and expectations, but also their concerns about a product idea or concept.

We help our clients listen to their target group and by doing so consider kids in the decision making process. This way, our clients benefit from new insights, honest feedback and innovative ideas at an early stage of the development process.

2. Visual design

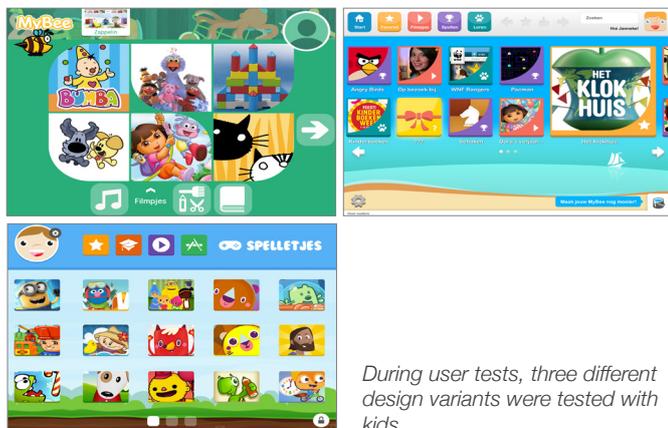
With a new app comes a new look and feel and a child and user friendly interaction design. Starting point of the new Mybee app were three different versions of the homepage. It was up to the kids to decide which one they liked best and which elements of each version made it to the next design iteration.

Setup

During one-on-one sessions, kids were shown the three different homepages in an alternating order. Based on a test script, the kids were asked questions about what they liked or didn't like and what they thought was clear or confusing in each of the three design versions.

Results

This round of research provided detailed insights for each design and interaction element of the different design version.



The results showed clearly:

- how kids navigate the app,
- which icons are and aren't self-explaining,
- which content categories match the kids' expectations,
- which interactions work best,
- to what extent kids are familiar with a search bar and
- how well kids understand the used terminology.

3. Usability

All insights from the previous user tests were combined into one new design. To be certain that the interaction design meets the needs and expectations of the young users, a clickable prototype was built and tested with the kids.

Setup

In this round of research, twelve kids participated in one-on-one user test sessions. The kids were first observed while exploring and navigating through the app on their own.

Second, they were asked to perform a couple of tasks, such as setting up a new user.

What is a user test?

During a standard user test we observe and interview kids while they interact with your product. This way, we can provide hands-on feedback on the usability and tell whether or not your product is missing essential features.

Conducting UX research with kids requires a lot of patience, experience and a profound understanding of the needs and capabilities of a specific age group. UXkids combines these skills with an objective perspective on your project. This way, we help our clients validate a concept or product in various stages during the development process.

Results

The insights from this round of user tests confirmed many of the design decisions that were made so far. The kids were mostly able to navigate the app independently and they were enthusiastic about the visual design.

However, the user tests also helped identify a couple of usability issues. For example, not all interactions were intuitive, causing kids to overlook certain features of the app. The insights gained from this round of research enabled UXkids to offer clear design suggestions for further optimization.

4. Overall user experience

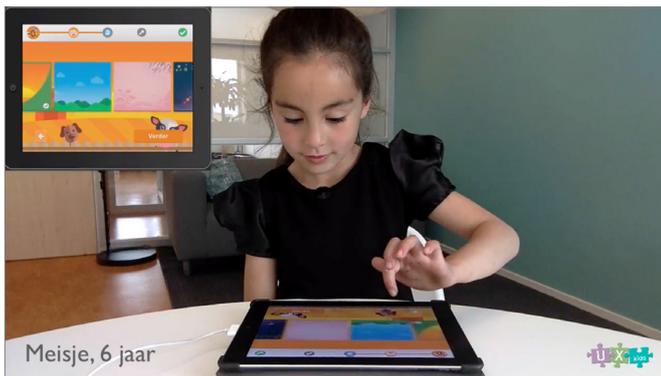
To make sure the final version of the MyBee app met the needs and expectations of the users, UXkids conducted a last round of research with both kids and their parents. For the kids, the focus of this last iteration was on the usability and the overall user experience of the entire app.

For the parents, the focus was on the first impression and the signup process of the app.

Setup

During this round of research, UXkids conducted 18 one-on-one user test sessions with children age 4, 6 and 8 and ten sessions with parents. Kids were encouraged to explore the app on their own, while UXkids observed them and asked questions only if necessary. While the interaction and content was still limited with the prototype, kids could now experience the final app with a broad selection of content.

Parents were asked to perform a series of tasks, such as creating a new account and adding a new user for their child.



A clickable prototype was tested with children.

Results

This final round of research provided clear insights into the needs and expectations of both kids and parents. Children up to 6 years of age appreciated the app the most. For this age group, all interactions were self explanatory, kids were enthusiastic about the content and personalization possibilities and they were excited about the look and feel of the app.

Older kids however were less enthusiastic about the app. This age group has passed their first steps online. They have already developed strong media preferences and feel little need for an new environment such as Mybee. At the same time, talking to parents of younger children, it became clear that children benefit from the Mybee app as early as two years of age.



The research could be followed live from the observation room or via an online livestream.

Parents were also enthusiastic about the app. They mostly appreciated the safe and child-friendly character of the app. However, the signup process turned out to be too long. Parents were not willing to spend as much time as was expected to set up a free app for their kids.

Conclusion

Based on the different rounds of research, UXkids advised KPN to lower the focus of the new Mybee app to children between 2 and 6 years of age.

The goal of KPN was to build a fun, challenging and child-friendly online environment for young children. By involving the users during the different stages of the design process of the new Mybee app, this ambition has become reality.