

AllKin - AK sensory shopping@app

Challenge statement

Introduction

Eleanor Swann founded AllKin following an accelerator program at UAL. In November 2024, her college recognised AllKin as a 'Future 50' nominee - an accolade for potential within business - and also received a surprise social impact nomination.

Background

Making desirable sensory fashion accessible seemed like a simple solution to the challenging personal circumstances that made it hard for Eleanor to leave the house.

++ The UK's disabled population holds an estimated £274 billion in spending power (Scope, 2022)

With research and insight, AllKin's emphasis shifted to the *how*, first and foremost ie. How would people with limited mobility or sensory and access needs experience desirable stylish fashion (or products) if they cannot get into shops physically, or try-on clothes with ease - or are overwhelmed by poor quality choices, online?

Focus-group (survey) insights showed that **finding and accessing the right products was hard**. There were limited desirable choices and it is challenging trying on items for fit (both on and off-line, because of sensory needs). Online, it is difficult to find things in one place, in sensory comfort; a range of shops were also cited with difficulty returning items as mostly problematic.

***“Retail is shrouded in ableist assumptions...
Comfort in your own skin shouldn't be a luxury”
- AK Founder***

Currently Online retail is the alternative to crowded, noisy and bright physical shopping malls - but online can still be fraught with sensory challenges - especially neurodivergent people with sensory needs, managing cognitive load. Furthermore, online interfaces can be overwhelming! (e.g. open tabs, busy text, unclear sizing/not enough relevant/needs information and questionably authentic reviews...)

Development Issues

Eleanor would like to get AK app to prototype stage so she can test it with a target audience and pitch for funding.

It has been impossible to access funding without a prototype - or get to MVP. The issue is cost. Eleanor has been quoted 2000-5000+ to build a test app (via app builder platform.) Where no money has changed hands, Eleanor has been asked for a share of the business - which at the time did not feel right. She now has another view to this, with the right person and agreements in place.

She has been sending applications to a range of opportunities (including more accelerators, with the hope of starting a build) - but it is a chicken and egg situation. For example, the last university she approached said they were potentially interested developing the AI side of things *once an app was ready to be developed further*.

APP - KEY FEATURES

In the first instance, AK wants to bring items directly to neurodivergent shoppers in comfort and calm, with **tailored bespoke sensory preferences on the interface** (this includes *how items are presented*) online and how they are stored - so they can be revisited with ease over time and visualised with physical try-ons in store - or even at home, when the time is right. A list of key features for the wider vision is below:

- Highest web/online/digital accessibility standards and feature including issues around motion and display/tracking/highlights.
- Nuanced product selection (AI) by profile from around the web. Eventually, blockchain will vet and promote relevant providers; Items filtered by profiles (modest subscription required.)
- Bespoke AR/VR changing room connected to physical stores (via app)
- Favourite/repeat items displayed inside individual profiles, allowing customers to collect from a range of suppliers.
- AI design input and personalised curations.

In simplest terms, online shopping is **not accessible enough**.

AK app's purpose is to be the go-to 'accessible online store' (fashion and lifestyle) to help parents/carers and anyone with sensory sensitivities/limited mobility/cognitive differences who finds online retail overwhelming - to shop in sensory comfort and ease.

I would like support/guidance to:

Build and test / then re-prototype with the following features:

- Enhanced Accessibility including–
 - Switching profiles - what is required to make the interface bespoke and switchable via personalised needs/profiles?**
 - Tailored response to a persons requirements (bespoke)
 - Subscription to access personalised interface (sensory needs)
- Build a case for funding support
- Fund prototype and MVP (and beyond)
- Roll out the app with main features to target audience and test range of products with visualisations, accordingly.
- Build corporate relationships (ie. commission if their sensory products are bought (via app) to build traction in B2B as the go-to sensory market platform.

TAKEAWAY

If Eleanor was to prioritise achieving one thing through the tech triage pilot, it would be to understand first steps (code?) for building an app (or web app?) with personalised sensory profiles.

THANK YOU