

# **ZOI**

**CREATING ETERNITY**

## **IMPRINT**

Title: ZOI - Create Eternity

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Matrikel-Nr.: 19-967-926

Date: June 2022

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Typeface: SF Pro Text and Montserrat

# I. ABSTRACT

Experiences and memories are the essence of our being. Consciously remembering and maintaining contact with the people who are important to us is crucial for dealing with loss and longing. How can we create enduring memories of friends and family even after they are gone? This work addresses what needs arise in the event of loss and develops a solution on how to meet them. The perspective taken in this work is that of the bereaved and the deceased or dying person. The solution focuses more on the appreciation of life than on loss and should occur during the affected persons' lifetime.

## KEYWORDS

Bereavement, Grief, Death, Relatives, Immortalizing, Thanotechnology, digital data, postmortem, conscious dying, memories, remembrance

## II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my mentors, Paulina Zybinska and Jürgen Späth, who helped me in weekly mentoring sessions to realise and complete this work and were always available to help me with questions or uncertainties from my site. I would also like to thank all the other mentors and teachers who, although they were not responsible for me, always helped with good feedback in the progress sessions and asked the questions that ensured that my project gained clarity. I want to thank Marcial Koch, as he made sure that the whole Bachelor process remained manageable.

I enjoyed my studies at the ZHdK, and the teachers who provided varied tasks and inspiring feedback in the modules played a not insignificant role in this. I would also like to thank my fellow students, with whom I was able to realise many great projects and drink a beer or two.

In my private life, I would like to thank my friends, who tell me the truth in honest and serious conversations and thus help me to see things as they

are. I would also like to thank you for your patience, especially when I am so stressed that I do not get in touch and disappear and leave one or the other messages unanswered. I want to thank my family for the opportunity always to have someone by my side who can help me in urgent situations.

This work could not have been realised without the help of others, and I would like to thank them for this help. The survey participants helped me get a clear picture of their needs and what things are important to them. I appreciate their participation in my work because most of them are still in a grieving process, and to be confronted with this topic is not easy, so thank you very much. The two interview partners who were available for questions and answers helped me a lot to get clear about in which directions I could go, and through them, I was able to have valuable insights into the topic. I would also like to thank the testing participants who helped me with my prototypes. Without you guys, I would not have been able to do this work.

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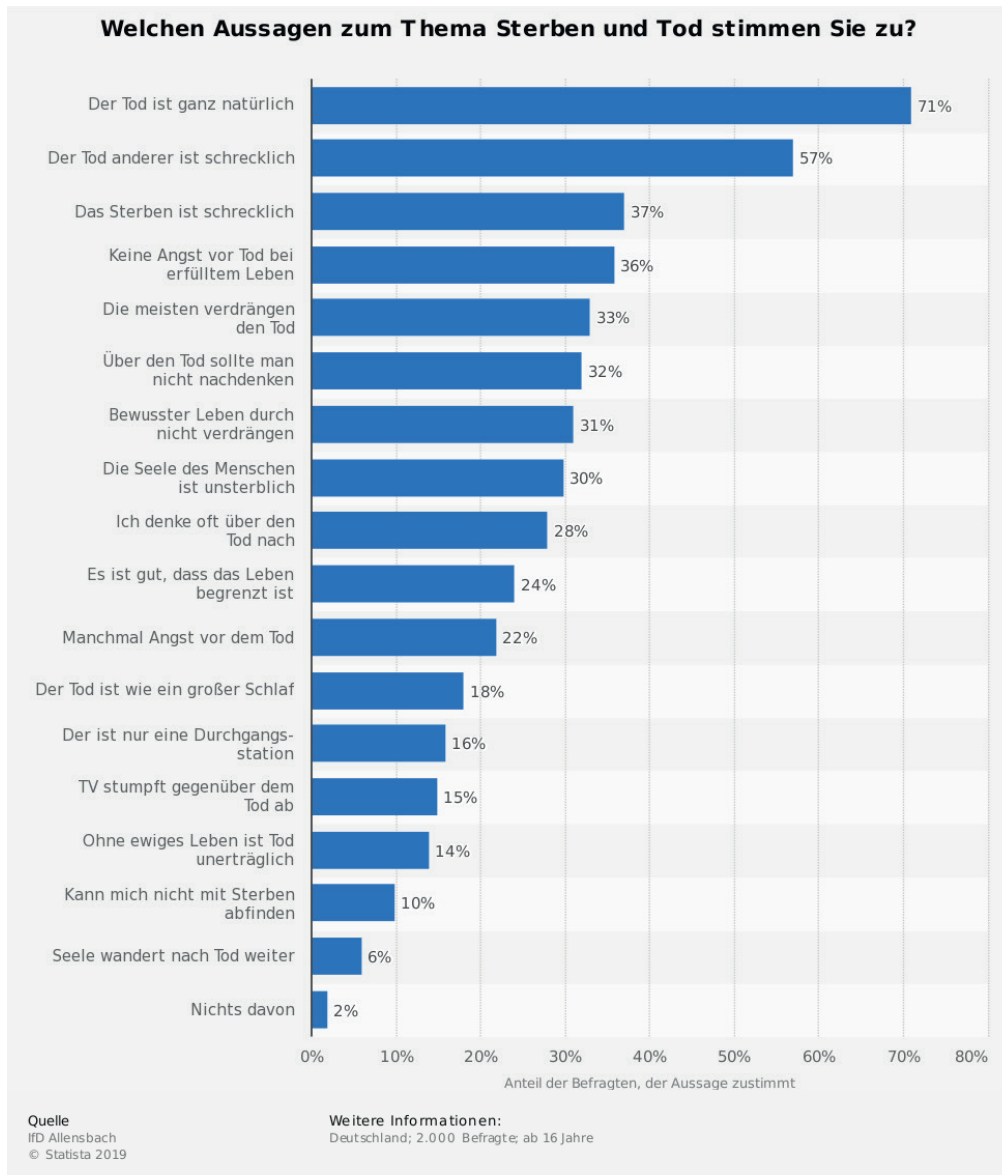
## IV. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

According to 71% of the 2,000 respondents to a 2019 IfD Allensbach public opinion survey, death is something that comes naturally. 57% agree that the death of others is a terrible experience, and 37% think dying itself is a terrible thing. With these results, it is not surprising that 32% of respondents believe that death should not be a topic to think about. The study shows, in my opinion, that despite its ubiquity and acceptance as a normal and natural event of life, death is still regarded with fear and discomfort. This finding may well come as no surprise, as few likely remember a person's passing in their environment as a positive experience. Despite the awareness of how tragic the loss of a person can be, the evolution of the funeral industry in recent years has been fascinating to observe. For example, one can read from a statistic about the willingness to spend money on funerals and the importance that funerals still have in recent years. Discount funerals have increased 25% from 2014 to 2020. I conclude that the bereaved are less interested in funerals than they were six years earlier, which I believe may have to do with the shift in the place of mourning from the actual funeral place to the virtual one. Online memorial portals have become enormously popular in recent years and are being used with increasing frequency. In situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic, online mourning portals could become the only type of mourning site.

Studies investigating whether mourning in online media is good or bad for the mourning process have concluded that mourning on the Internet can offer advantages and even promote the mourning process. The possibility of meeting one's own needs and the flexibility that the Internet provides mourners become the decisive advantage. Bereaved people have different needs, which should be targeted individually. The possibility of grieving at one's own pace and the way one would like also take the social pressure off the mourners, and there

is no competition about who produces the biggest pile of handkerchiefs. Today, memorial portals are always created when someone has died, and in most cases, they are managed by a previously undefined admin. This circumstance bears some risks. For example, it can lead to Mourning announcements by people who should not be able to do so. Fake death announcements from stalkers or death announcements with insulting contents have unfortunately been around for a long time and appear again and again in various newspapers/mourning portals. The psychological effects on the bereaved or the person falsely declared dead are thereby unimaginable. One of the most common triggers for depression is grief and the associated grieving process. A grieving process occurs due to how long it lasts and how the loss is dealt with. In grief work, the goal is to conclude with the death and a further appropriate way of dealing with the loss. It is important to note that not every loss has the same prospect to conclude with it.

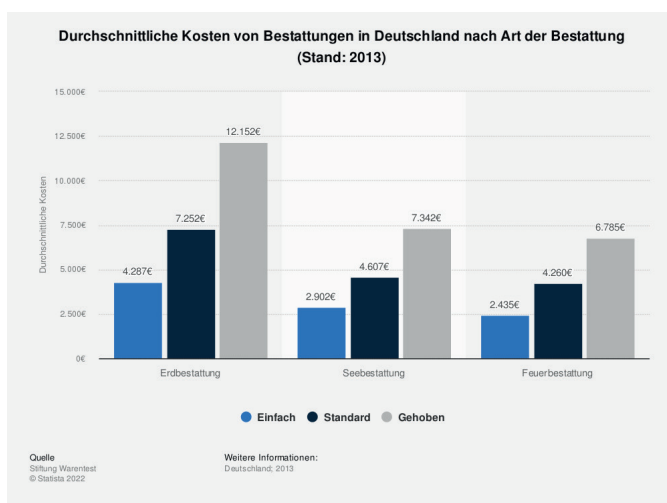
There are losses that you can never learn to live with, especially in the case of parents who have to mourn the loss of their child it is a common thing. In dealing with a bereavement, one thing is often crucial: maintaining contact with the deceased, which should continue and not be avoided. This connection maintenance is complex for many since the missing person is no longer present, and contact can only occur onesided. Most of the tools used to grieve are images, but these can hardly reflect what we are looking for, namely a sign of character and familiarity. What we want depends very much on the person grieving. However, according to my survey, most agree that video and audio are the things they would most like and would dislike being without. Interestingly, according to my survey, most would also like to leave a message or note to say one more thing to their bereaved, which would meet the need for the bereaved to maintain contact.



#### STATEMENTS ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF DEATH SORTED BY FREQUENCY

This chart shows the prevailing general opinion on the subject of death in Germany. 2000 respondents took part in this survey in Germany.

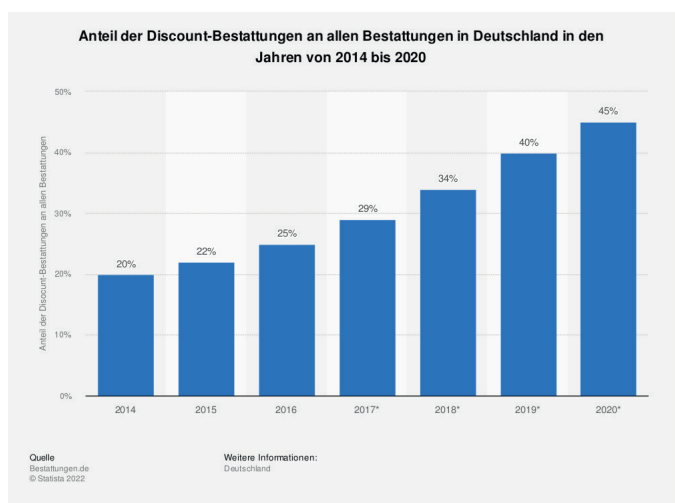
**Source:** IfD Allensbach © Statista 2019



#### AVERAGE COSTS OF FUNERAL IN GERMANY SORT BY TYPE

This Graphic shows three different price averages for burials, cremation and sea burials. status of the year 2013

**Source:** Stiftung Warentest © Statista 2022



#### DISCOUNT-FUNERALS IN GERMANY 2014 – 2020 IN %

This Graphic shows the increasing proportion of discount funerals in Germany. From 2014 – 2020 it has increased by 25%.

**Source:** Bestattungen.de © Statista 2022

# V. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Death, its cause and its effects, is something that everyone in their life is forced to face. We cannot stop it or undo it, so we have no choice but to accept it. But maybe the way we look at death is entirely wrong, and perhaps death isn't necessarily a bad thing. When we think of the subject of death, we always think of the separation of the dead from the world of the living, a person has been taken from us, and the possibility of being with this person is gone. This way of thinking is understandable, and the associated grief is logical. But how do we deal with this situation when death is or was wanted by the dead person, and how do you remember someone with a death wish as a life-affirming and positive person? People who die, people who want to die and people who die unexpectedly have at least one thing in common, they have people in their closer social environment to whom they mean something and who are now mourning. How these people deal with death depends on their cultural background. The way of coping with grief, burial and accepting death and dying varies from culture to culture. No method is correct or more appropriate than another. Only in what way does the dying or already dead person want to say goodbye to his relatives. Unfortunately, these thoughts are still too few, and the dying person then has to live with their relatives' decision, who may have different principles of belief and can also decide against the will of the dead person. I would like to improve this situation and create something that allows people, against any external pressure, to decide on things that feel right for them.

The problem is that one deals with the own death far too little and does not talk about this topic with the people who should know what wishes one has for the own funeral. Reasons for it can be very different. In our society, the subject of death has only little place. Why one does not talk to his relatives about these topics can also be due to tensions when different beliefs or other family disputes are present in the family. The funeral organisation is then usually taken over by one part of the family and not paid attention to what the dead wanted to have or what would be perceived as „right“ for the other part of the family.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 DESK RESEARCH

Gaining new insights and knowledge in light of death and grief is vital to my work.

Through the various media and sources, I want to get an insight into the subject and provide knowledge regarding the things that will allow me to work out a solution. The literature concerning death, mourning, mourning work, memories, dying and other items should broaden my horizon, deepen my knowledge and open me to the topic.

### 2.2 INTERVIEWS

During my work, I plan to interview different people about my topic. Out of interest, I would also like to conduct interviews with various faith representatives, even if they are not necessarily crucial to the work process. I will probably not be able to do interviews with patients as they are very reluctant to be released by their institution. However, I will be able to talk to grief workers and answer my questions with their help.

### 3. MOTIVATION

I had the luck to have an experience with death where I learned that it is much more important to do whatever you think is the best in this situation to deal with loss and grief. In cases like that, it is much more important that everybody has one's tempo, and nobody should be forced to do something just because it's the way we are used to doing it. When I think about how I want to be buried, I would be very unhappy with a solution I wouldn't like, and of course, I'm dead, and I can't be disappointed but do I want my relatives to wonder if they did the right thing? Wouldn't it be much more pleasant for all that I can rely on that my wishes will be respected and my relatives know that they could fulfil my latest desires.

### 4. CONTRIBUTION

I have been interested in the topic of the dying process for several years. The two most decisive moments that one can share with a person are the beginning of life and death. While people like to talk about the origin of life and have a generally positive attitude towards it, death and the end of life have an extremely negative connotation. Death is something one should not talk about. In many cultural circles, death, despite its importance, is a taboo subject and a topic of which one is afraid. This attitude towards death results in depression, social seclusion, and isolation of the affected relatives. I would like to find out where this comes from and how we can help people in this already difficult situation in life. At the moment, I'm thinking about something that allows others to understand their true beliefs to make decisions without being forced into making the things they don't want to.

I could imagine a platform on which one can primarily exchange memories. Which framework this exchange should take place will hopefully reveal itself to me through research, interviews and tests in the process. The exchange should lead to the fact that one has memories available in the case of a death of a loved one, which should help one cope better with the mourning process and remember the missing person. I shared for a selected group of mourners profiles with different media, with which the



dead person is connected, and a specially created profile for a deceased person I could imagine well. A shared sharing chronicle for two people to share familiar moments and thus provide for each other and themselves can be an excellent way to make the subject less complicated and more associated

with positive associations. I like the idea that such an exchange can take place positively for years before the death of a participant occurs, and thus the united chronicle ends and still stands for the time of life they shared and not the end.

# VI. RESEARCH FIELD

## 1. Related Projects

This section deals with other projects that I came across in my research. They should serve me mainly as inspiration and also as a comparison. Overall, many solutions deal with death and offer a platform to mourn or organise the funeral. Crucial differences I could determine above all in the approach, while these applications always deal with the perspective of the mourners and are used only after the occurrence of death, there are hard to no solutions from the point of view of the dying. Communication and conveying created messages or messages from the deceased to their survivors is unfortunately nowhere an issue and not offered. Another major drawback to the services I found was that while there is a lot of information on the internet, it is highly scattered and must be painstakingly compiled.

### 1.1 Living Memory Home

By creating memory buildings and constructions associated with the deceased person, Living Memory Home aims to create a place that invites you to linger and remember. The focus here is on honouring a person and keeping them in memory while consciously focusing on the willingness to create something for the deceased. The variety of design solution possibilities should have the effect that an exactly fitting place can be made. With the project, fun and somewhat positive feelings are included in the mourning process, which should give the mourning process lightness. Unfortunately, the choice of what media can be included is limited. The solution is exciting, but due to its unique way and the look that takes some getting used to, it will probably not be used very often.

### 1.2 We + Care

The application is very suitable for caring for and looking after a person together. The application is specially designed for people who can no longer care for their own needs and need help. It is striking how clear and simple the design is and that only the most essential functions are available. Although the app is supposed to work for many different care networks, such as people in long-term care, aid organisations, neighbourhood assistance or daycare centres, it seems to be able to cover the needs and makes a good impression. For the bachelor project, I like to be inspired by the user-oriented and optimised design principles of this project.

### 1.3 peacefully - remembrance

This website is primarily about commemorating deceased persons, who are offered here a public place to commemorate them and express sympathy for their loss. The modern way of displaying deaths is clear and convincing in its simplicity, so it is crea-

ted for all kinds of clientele and does not limit its circle of users. Unfortunately, the direct playback of music selected by the advertiser is user-unfriendly and causes initial confusion for the site user, and the playback of music is not always convenient. The design, unfortunately, seems old-fashioned and pathetic. For example, one sees many pictures with candles and is often confronted with symbols of religious bearing.

### 1.4 Tweekaboo

Tweekaboo is an app to capture the favourite moments of pregnancy and birth of a child. Like a diary, Tweekaboo is designed to capture and store moments (pictures) so that, over time, a digital photo book develops. The books (folders) can be created and edited together. To keep the memories not only digitally, but the app also offers the possibility to have the collected works professionally printed and conveniently delivered to your home. I like the idea that a typical digital place can be used to collect memories and that this is physically supplemented with the final print. Even though the app's design doesn't appeal to me that much visually, I like the fact that they made sure that the functionality was the main focus and refrained from decorating the design with embellishments.

### 1.5 ab unter die Erde

A funeral home that understands how to take care of the mourner as well as possible and where you are personally and individually cared for. The unique thing about Ab unter die Erde is that it does not treat emotions with coolness but adapts to the emotional state of the mourners. Thus it is possible with Ab unter die Erde not only to organise sadly, and negative feelings dominated funerals. The joy of life should be allowed to persist and significantly impact with more alternative funeral methods and funeral celebrations. Packages that make it easier for the mourners to choose the funeral service are crucial things that give the user the impression that Ab unter die Erde is really about finding an optimal solution and not about making a profit.

### 1.6 remembr

The possibility of keeping a deceased person in memory with digital media and creating a collective smorgasbord to promote the typical exchange of the dead is given with Remembr. Since Remembr offers the advantage of a screen reader, it is one of the few barrier-free applications and allows access for all participants. A guide with ten tips on how to help a mourner complements the offer but seems a little out of place, as similar functions or offers are not available.

## **1.7 HELLO – COMMON PRACTICE**

Talking to your loved ones about complex topics like death wishes for the funeral is challenging and not fun. With HELLO, you talk about things you don't usually talk

about and get to know them better than you thought you would you do. HELLO, addresses topics such as life, wishes, death and more and promises to be fun at the same time.

## **2 FIELD RESEARCH**

### **2.1 CAREGIVER AND GRIEF**

A caregiver of a dying person is expected to make the situation as comfortable and bearable as possible for the ill person concerned. In doing so, no attention is paid to the psychological impact on the caregiver, and the effects of the caring persons are not considered. This article addresses the effect the dying process can have on the caregiver during caregiving and after the patient's death.

### **2.2 SELF-DETERMINED DYING/CONSCIOUS DYING**

The topic of self-determined dying and the cultural influence on the feasibility of one's death. The communication between the patient, his relatives, a social worker, and the attending physician is extremely difficult, as the opinions on self-determined dying are not prominent. Cultural influences and the subjective opinion of the different parties play a significant role in the decision process. Studies have shown that most social workers are in favour of self-determined dying. However, what influences a social worker should and may have on the patient or their family is not easily definable. The cultural influence of family members and their effect on the patient can significantly impact their decision. Proper handling of the issue and mediation between the various parties is the key to solving the problem.

### **2.3 INFLUENCES OF PRACTICES AND RITUALS**

Various studies have shown that the method does not play a decisive role in how the bereaved feel about the mourning process. More critical is what options were available to the bereaved. A study has shown that it sought to determine whether cremation, as compared to burial, evoked more grief and a

sense of more significant loss in the bereaved.

### **2.4 PALLIATIVE PATIENTS AND HOPE**

Dealing with patients' hope and how nurses should act with a patient can be crucial for their mental state. Hope is critical to the patient and essential in the healing process. The nurses care about the therapy and its success. It is crucial that the patient is aware of his condition and educated about his options to ensure this. The difficulty, in this case, is to enable the patient to take the necessary measures. Still, the patient does not consider the steps needed because the acceptance of the state of health is only partial or even non-existent. Which approach is the most appropriate for the two parties, and how a joint solution can be worked out.

### **2.5 DIGITAL REMEMBRANCE AND MOURNING ON ONLINE PLATFORMS**

Everyone grieves differently, and while one is the suitable method for someone to deal with death, another may not. Therefore, it is essential to give people the space to decide which way is the right one and in which situations a person wants to be confronted with death. The possibility of mourning on online platforms has proven to be a positive method. Flexibility and the variety of interaction possibilities give the mourner a free hand to decide how much and when they want to participate in the mourning process. Psychological findings of how positively online platforms can influence the mourning process provide a basis for further considerations about how online solutions can complement our lives.

### **2.6 THANATECHNOLOGIES**

Thanatechnology is a field of technology research and deals with what technologies can be used or should be developed to enable people to live or be after death. We live in a time where our bodies are mortal, but our digital embodiment remains after we die. Achieving immortality and escaping death are becoming more realistic due to technological progress. Various concepts are being developed to achieve immortality with the digital data we all leave behind.

# VII. CONCEPT

## 1. SURVEY

With the survey, I wanted to find out what kind of grief management most people use and which strategies are used. I also wanted to find out what means the bereaved would like to have to remember their deceased. To distinguish what I could enrich the bereaved with, I first wanted to find out which means are currently used at all and therefore asked about the physical and digital mementoes commonly used today for the respondents. To generate more precise answers, I wanted respondents to answer these questions for one specific deceased person at a time. When the need arose to fill out the responses for multiple people, I asked participants to start the survey again.

To create something that would evoke memories and make them transportable, I wanted to know what resources the respondents would like and if they would even need any. To ensure that the respondents understood that they should only fill out the survey for a selected deceased person, I asked two personal questions initially, which only make sense if you answer them for a specific person. I hoped to gain interesting insights from open-ended questions, as these offered the respondents the opportunity to give me all sorts of things to answer, and I thus hoped for a broad spectrum of answers that would hopefully be as diverse or insightful as possible.

To reach mourners and thus survey my target group, I turned to mourning groups on social media, in which I published the survey. I also shared a duplicate of the survey with people in my immediate environment, where I did not pay attention to whether mourners or non-mourners were among them. This survey is therefore not representative, but I found it interesting to compare the different results in the end and what conclusions can be drawn from the difference. Fifty completed surveys were received in the mourning group and from the mixed group 19.

### RESULTS OF THE SURVEY - GRIEF GROUP

From the results of the grief group, it could be seen now that over 60% of the respondents have been actively grieving someone dead for more than three months. In 16% of the cases, the deceased has died in the past three months, and in 20%, someone has passed, but the respondents said they are not actively grieving today. None of the respondents said they had not lost anyone.

Most of the deceased were their partners (44%) and relatives (16%), and also their children (14%). 26% said they had lost at least one parent.

When asked how and with what the respondents would grieve, I received many different answers,

which I compiled in groups to understand them better. The most exciting results were that 25 digital means were indicated with which the respondents mourn and remember their deceased. 37 times they answered with photos and 12 times with objects. A significant part of the persons tried to remember the deceased with thoughts and imagination, namely, 20 times. Eight times the method of remembering the dead by talking to others was chosen. It was also interesting that two persons stated that they used exercises to remember better or keep a feeling of contact with the deceased. It is important to mention that the number of photos given can be pictured on digital devices and physical pictures, although only two times it was clear that they were not digital photos.

By the fact that one does not know whether with the pictures digital or printed pictures are meant, with the number, the digital use of mourning could change enormously and fluctuate thus between 25 and 67, used means to remember.

When asked what it means to mourn, 22 people agreed that they would like to use video or audio recordings. 12 individuals would like printed photos, and 13 would like to manipulate objects. Nine individuals indicated they would not need any means.

### RESULTS MIXED GROUP

The mixed group, at 68.4%, is composed primarily of people who have already lost someone but have been able to let go of that person over time and are no longer actively grieving. 3 of the 19 respondents have not yet lost a relative. In the mixed group, therefore, only 15.8% are actively grieving.

The distribution looks similar in the mixed group, but only three people resort to video or audio recordings and prefer to reminisce about the mourning group. Seven times photos are used, and once the music is called.

That means with which gladly would be mourned are video and audio recordings above all nine answers. Objects follow in the 2nd place with six mentions, and printed photos are wished only three times.

### COMPARISON OF THE GROUPS

It is interesting to compare the two surveys and the similar but different ways of answering the questions. The mourning group, which is with 76% still actively mourning, compared to the mixed group, with only 15% active mourners, clearly more in the mourning process and for which the topic seems to be more current at the moment, has, in my opinion, more significance. In addition, 62.5% of the deceased are relatives in the mixed group, which probably caused less grief than the loss of 44% of partners

and 14% of their children in the bereavement group. Whether the digital media estate would like to be determined and if photos and video recordings would like to be determined which should be left behind answered by both groups with approx. 50% with yes.

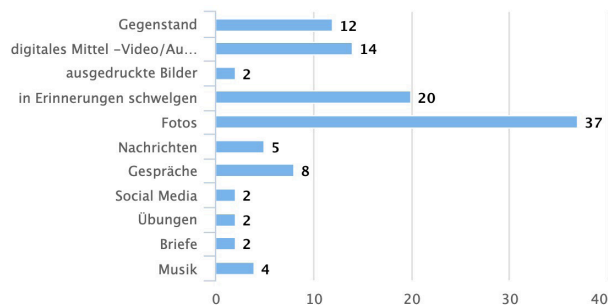
Would people like to leave a message to their survivors? Only 4 of all respondents would not want to leave anything to their survivors. Ten would like to write a letter, eight would like to leave photos, and six would like to leave objects. Surprising was the multitude of messages, which should still be left, namely 19. However, with these, it is not clear which kind of medium this is to transport. A total of 19 spoke in favour of leaving a message in the form

of a video or audio recording. The need to leave a message for the bereaved is so great is quite surprising to me and shows a clear will to want to help shape the memory diversity of one's loved ones.

## FINDINGS

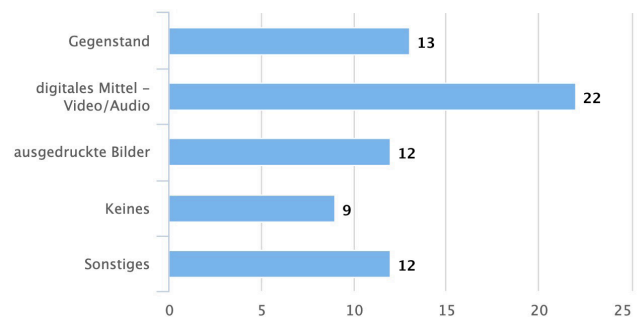
What seems to be clear from the survey is that the possibilities of our desired culture of remembrance are not exhausted and that the need for relatives to possess other mementoes, especially in digital form, is great. In addition, there is a great need to help shape the memory landscape for the bereaved consciously. Messages and messages want to be used by almost everyone to leave something for the bereaved. There also is a need for this, according to the survey.

Grafik welche Mittel werden verwendet



### WHICH MEDIA IS USED AT THE MOMENT?

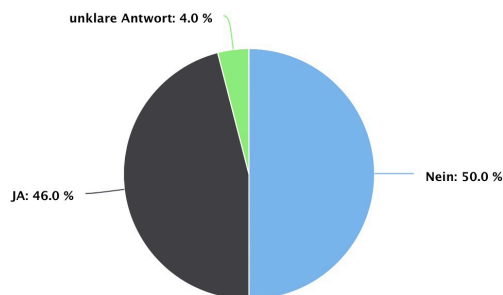
The most used media is with 37 votes clearly the photos, following from simple thoughts and with 14 votes digital media for example videos and audiorecordings. Photos could be in a digital manner or not, its not clear but 2 Persons explicitly votet for printet photos.



### WHICH MEDIA WOULD YOU PREFER TO USE?

most of the people would want to mourn and remember with digital media for example videos or audiorecordings. 13 Persons prefer to have an object and 12 would want printet out photos.

Grafik Korrektur



WOULD YOU WANT TO DECIDE WHICH MEDIA OF YOURSELF IS AVAIABLE AFTER YOU PASSED? 46% would want to regulate which media is avaiable after their passing. 50% wouldn't want to and 4% werent sure about it.

## 2. INTERVIEWS

I was fortunate to have two insightful interviews. I wanted to conduct them because the insight into the topic seems more tangible to me, and people who deal with it intensively can provide answers to questions that come closest to the truth since they can also be affected in their function but mostly have to be observers and understanders.

### PASTOR/COUNSELOR AND BEREAVEMENT COUNSELOR – MR H.

Mr H. works 60% in a palliative department in a hospital and accompanies, in practice, his remaining workload mourners through the mourning process. Through his training as a Catholic priest and the obligatory year of civilian service, Mr H. came into contact with dying and mourning people. He decided after his civilian service to follow the path of a chaplain. Mr H. has been practising this profession for more than 35 years and has gained a lot of experience dealing with them.

Letting go as the essential component of a healthy mourning process is elementary, and even if it does not always seem to work, the best way to deal with the grief of a loved one. However, some people can never let go, for whom grief becomes an ever-present emotional state. Especially terrible sudden deaths and deceased children leave behind relatives who are dependent on the help of a grief counsellor. Despite therapy and time past, these dead often remain omnipresent and never let the bereaved get over their death. Explains Mr H. With these, it is essential to learn to deal with the grief and find a healthy measure of suffering.

Since 2020, "persistent grief disorder" has been recognised as an official clinical picture by the WHO.

In developing how we deal with grief, Mr H. sees clear changes in the cohesion of relatives and the size of the mourning communities. Due to today's way of life in cities, the sympathy for deaths has changed. In the villages in the past, the whole town mourned the end and received support from all sides. Death was much better known, and it was more apparent that a person was in mourning. Today, people often do not know who is mourning, and the sympathy has decreased. The presence of relatives and the support of friends can be decisive for the course of the mourning.

According to Mr H., today's development to mourn for oneself and use social media to commemorate relatives is neither bad nor good. Instead, it is about meeting the needs of the mourners. Everyone takes their time and grieves in different ways, pressuring someone is the completely wrong way.

The relationship with the deceased is crucial to the grieving process and whether it is healthy. Healthily, the dead should be remembered, and the relation-

ship should be nurtured. One should let go and not forget. Acceptance is the crucial key in dealing with grief. It is important not to avoid or repress the deceased. One should remember and commemorate the dead. If you used to enjoy doing something together, you should not stop doing it because it is painful, but keep doing it and, in this way, maintain the connection. It would be healthy to have a kind of long-distance relationship with the deceased, whom you can contact whenever you need or want to. Common ground should not be avoided just because it is painful, and dealing with and remembering the deceased must be maintained at all costs. Working with memories of the deceased and confronting them should be done consciously. It would be wrong if one deals with it too much and gets into a „downward spiral“. The best way to deal with it is to let the deceased fade into the background of your consciousness over time until you are only aware of them when you want or need to be.

### FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S DAUGHTER AND HEAD OF A FUNERAL HOME – MRS T.

According to Mrs T., the development of differences in dealing with death is also noticeable as a funeral director. She said many alternative burial options had been added in recent years, and the options do not seem to be diminishing. Despite today's more intensive occupation with the own death and the funeral associated with it, the attention lies less and less on the funeral ceremony itself, and the kind of remaining in the memory gets more important.

So-called discount funerals increased by 25% from 2014 to 2020. While in 2014, only almost a quarter of the funerals took place in the discount price segment, in 2020, it is already nearly half (45%).

This development shows that the funeral could become a sideshow of the mourning process and increasingly loses importance. Furthermore, the cultural background makes a big difference. While a large part of our society seems to be approaching the funeral more and more like a haphazard process, the type of funeral is still of decisive importance for certain religions. Above all, the relatives are, in this case, the deciding factor on how the funeral is carried out. Sometimes the wishes of the deceased are not considered, but they are of greater importance to Mrs T. It is important to find a compromise. It is essential to find a compromise and a suitable solution for both.

To make provisions for one's funeral, most funeral homes already offer pension plans so that all arrangements have already been made in the event of a death. It is important to leave these in the will. Otherwise, these provisions are not obligatory and do not have to be implemented by the surviving dependents.



## **FINDINGS**

Commonalities between the two interviews can be found mainly in the views concerning the changes in the mourning process. Both agree that today it is known that the culture of remembrance of the deceased is of greater importance for the mourning process than the implementation of the funeral service and the associated procedure. Both emphasise how individually relatives deal with how they want to mourn and how one wants to commemorate a dead person. There is no right and wrong, and suppression and the conscious fading out of the deceased from their pressure or the pressure of outsiders provides for an alarming development and an unhealthy mourning process.

The possibility of planning one's funeral is suitable for both of them. Still, they differ in their feelings about who should have more decision-making power over the execution of this. Mr H. thinks that the surviving relatives must live with the funeral and thus may demand more decision-making power. Mrs T., on the other hand, is more in favour of the wishes of the deceased and thinks that these should be complied with if possible. They both find the compromise reasonable and emphasise that such things should definitely be talked about and wishes and concerns should be openly communicated. The importance of implementing the requests is only of secondary importance in funerals. It is more decisive that there are no doubts that the right decisions have been made in retrospect. In the worst case, this can lead to poor closure with the death, and the mourning process takes an unhealthy direction.

## **PERSONA**

### **DORIS MÜLLER - DYING - SELF-CARE**

Description of the Persona - about the person  
Persona 01 is a rational woman who is happy that her children are finally out of the house and that she and her husband now have more time for themselves. P 01 doesn't think much of pompous funerals and sad farewells. He finds it extremely unfortunate that she probably won't live to see her become a grandmother.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

56 years old

Mother of two children (24; 26)

Works as an office clerk 100% of the time

She likes to play darts in her free time

Suffered from lung cancer for one year - life expectancy approx. 1.5 years left

## **A TYPICAL DAY**

Persona 01 gets up in the morning and needs a coffee for the first time, which she enjoys with her cell phone. While doing so, she browsed social media and watched the news. On social media, she spends a lot of time chatting with acquaintances and relatives and sending funny pictures to each other.

## **THIS IS THE PROBLEM I WANT YOU TO SOLVE FOR ME**

The grandchildren will never be able to have contact with their grandmother, which Persona 01 wants so much. The grandchildren will not be able to build a relationship, and the only keepsake will be some pictures.

## **THESE ARE THE FEATURES I LIKE THE MOST**

The feature of only revealing things when Persona wants it finds it particularly useful. So it is possible to publish certain content only when certain things happen or certain ages are reached. Persona 01 also likes the possibility of relatives exchanging things with each other and remembering things together. Or to share memories with others.

## **A TYPICAL QUOTE FROM ME**

When I die, I don't want a big tam-tam, and I don't care what happens. After all, I am dead. However, I do not wish to be forgotten.

## **THAT ANNOYS ME IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

When people are offended because you don't answer them immediately, Persona 01 spends a lot of time on social media and loves chatting with others. Still, others don't understand that just because you're available doesn't mean you always have to be available right away, it bugs them.

## **REASONS WHY I USE THIS APP**

The app allows Persona 01 to tell stories to her grandchildren. Stories about their own lives and about their children, who will be the parents. Persona 01 also hopes that one of her children will live in the house where she grew up. For this purpose, it should be possible to make an audio tour so that the stories of the house are not lost.

## **REASONS WHY I COULD NOT SOLVE THIS PROBLEM UNTIL NOW**

Until now, there are no comparable services. In addition, media tend to get lost or become unusable over time due to modernisation. When a person dies, his memories and stories are not good, and for others, archivable/savable/consumable.

## **I USE THIS APP. THE MOST**

Persona 01 uses Facebook and LinkedIn most often, needing one for work and the other privately. She likes networking best and contact with others.

## **IT MAKES ME HAPPY**

The contact and networking with the people you want. Also, through social media, you always learn a lot about other people's lives and what's going on with others, which is exciting and lovely to watch others share moments in which they are happy.

## **THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF**

Those things will be lost that I've spent my life guarding against. The sale of my parents' house and forgetting all the exciting things in that old building.

### **MOST IMPORTANT THINGS**

- Will die of cancer - will make arrangements.
- Wants to leave messages for grandchildren and therefore takes up different media.
- Tells good night stories and later stories about life.
- Wants stories about the house to be preserved.
- Likes the exchange of media between relatives and acquaintances.
- Contact with her grandchildren after her death
- Choice of when to publish
- Recording and thus being able to contact survivors
- Leaving behind knowledge

### **DENNIS MÜLLER - SURVIVOR/RELATIVE - PROVIDENT**

Description of the Persona - about the person  
Persona 03 became a father two years ago and enjoyed spending time with his son. Three years ago, his mother passed away from lung cancer. The familiar son with his ex-wife lives with her and sees his father only at weekends. Persona 03 misses his son always very much. Through the loss of his mother, Persona 03 realised how important it is to make arrangements before death to have memories afterwards.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PERSONA - BIOGRAPHY**

29 years old  
Father of one child (2)  
Works as a dentist  
Great enthusiasm for palaeontology  
He is divorced, and his son lives with his wife

### **A TYPICAL DAY**

Persona 03 always gets up early in the morning and is stressed. He has to go to work. Once at work, he deals with nothing but his patients. Only in the evening Persona 03 can finally relax and uses the time to record all the things that are important to him to remember in moments when it is necessary.

### **THIS IS THE PROBLEM I WANT YOU TO SOLVE FOR ME**

Although everyone takes pictures and videos all the time, very few of them serve any purpose. Most of them gather dust in some gallery and lose their meaning. If you want to look at them, you have to search through countless media and ultimately lose the overview.

Sometimes I get pictures of my son via Whatsapp and unfiltered everything available. Then the selection begins.

### **I PARTICULARLY LIKE THESE FUNCTIONS**

I especially like that the data filing can be actively managed or happens through the reminder function. So the more you remember and maintain the filing, the more targeted you can remind. I also like that content can be created together for each other. I want that you can pray to others for reminders.

### **A TYPICAL QUOTE OF MINE**

Hold on to what you don't want to lose to avoid losing what you like to hold on to. Precaution is the key to not dealing with facts afterwards that are not correctable again.

### **THIS ANNOYS ME IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

I'm incredibly annoyed when I have to dig through countless things to find what I'm looking for. I don't want to have to sort dryly. This should be fun.

### **REASONS WHY I USE THIS APP**

I use the app mainly to archive and save memories, so I hope that I always have easy access to them and nothing gets lost. The memories of my son are significant to me, so when he is not with me for a long time, I still have him with me somehow.

### **REASONS WHY I COULD NOT SOLVE THIS PROBLEM UNTIL NOW**

So far, it's not about archiving selected data and filing it carefully, but more about just pushing something somewhere. Also, sharing with others is more about communicating and less about collecting and creating something together. Being in it together instead of just talking about it.

### **THIS IS THE APP I USE THE MOST**

Most often, I need social media. There, I see what is going on and can relax comfortably.

### **IT MAKES ME HAPPY**

When I'm looking for a specific picture or need to watch a video and find it within a short time, I'm happy. The closeness to my son through updates and the possibility of sharing all kinds of media.

### **THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF**

I am afraid of forgetting a person I love and losing elementary things. My mother left me the recipe for my favourite cake because I asked for it through the application. This would have been lost for sure.

### **MOST IMPORTANT THINGS**

- Mother died of cancer years ago
- child (2) lives with mother only every second-weekend visit
- Archiving memories is significant to him
- Memories as a means of archiving - sorting
- Sharing of memories
- Filtering of memories
- Asking for mementoes/pictures etc.
- Fear of forgetting elementary things which one wants to have
- Providing for easy usability afterwards
- Proximity to remembered person

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- Fear of forgetting elementary things which one wants to have
- Providing for easy usability afterwards
- Proximity to remembered person

# VIII. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

## 1. CULTURAL-PROBE

### IDEA

I got the idea to create a Cultural Probe from the survey. It was vital for me to find out which things would help people and how people would approach such a complex topic. The feedback I got helped me later to know what to implement in the further prototype. I was primarily interested in creating memory exercises, trying them out, and noticing what works and what doesn't. The Cultural Probe consists of 13 pages and includes daily tasks. One solves these in 5 days. Altogether one is to think thereby of loved ones. On the first day, one understands the Cultural Probe and the general questions about death and dying. In addition, one considers which four persons one wants to include in this Cultural Probe. Every day there is a question that one wants to deal with and to which one should respond the next day. From the second day onwards, the procedure is that you first answer the daily task and then select one person at random and then answer five questions. With these five questions, I was not concerned with the answer but that the persons have to think carefully about which answer they give. While thinking about it, the subjects then remember that person and thus create a memory relationship. The whole culture rehearsal was more about the people actively placing this person and how they feel about it. Rather than what response they don't get from it. Since I wanted to convey to the users that what is written down is private, these five personal questions are not sent back to me and remain with the person. A subsequent survey on the Culture probe showed me how it worked for them.

## RESULTS AND USER OPINIONS

The results were varied. In general, most people liked it. Most people also actively remembered the people you should have thought about. So the purpose of the Culture probe was fulfilled. Criticism was mainly in the areas of understanding and the clarity of the task. Four people would want a similar experience and help me with another prototype again. Unfortunately, some people found that the study of drawing the dearest persons with three meaningful characteristics is too tricky, which is why, unfortunately, only three people solved this task correctly. The clues I placed to indicate which things are private or not private were unfortunately not too decisive and were overlooked by some people. Thus it was unclear what is private and what is not private.

## THINGS LEARNED FROM IT

For me, I learned how important the wording is in such things. It is crucial which words I use in which context, and just because something is understandable for me, it doesn't mean it is for other people. In addition, it has become clear to me that specific exercises are only suitable for some people. Moreover, such memory stories should not be forced. So two users told me that they felt stressed to remember a person at a particular time consciously. And would have filled in the Culture probe at a time they chose for themselves? Another problem I had was with one person having only one other dearest person. Although four people promised to support doing a similar experience again, I noticed that the willingness to do such things was not very high during the conversations. However, this is probably also because these people were previously unknown to me.



CULTURE PROBE - COVER SITE



EXERCISE OF THE DAY - DAY 05

On the top you can see the Exercise from yesterday you have to answer for the next day(this day). At the bottom you see the exercise for day 5.

## 2. ZOI

Then we have the origin from the Greek and means live because it should be in this application mainly about the everyday life and less about death.

### FUNCTIONS

The app consists of 3 main functions. These are the sharing, the chronicles and the memories. These functions overlap as a whole. Can not work without each other? Thus, the memories are in the chronicles and worries for the exchange between people in the different channels. A channel is a place in which a chronicle is located. The term channel is mainly for understanding but is not used in the application. It is always the language of chronicles. The name Chronicle is for the simple reason that the exchange is mapped in chronological order. Of course, other micro functions still behave on these but will not be discussed in detail.

### SHARING

Share something with your loved ones, what is no matter, you are in the way what you want to leave no limits. It is best to think about what you would be reluctant to do without when creating. What would you still like to share? What may or would you still want to say.

- Media, such as audio or video recordings
- Letters, messages or objects
- Scheduled messages to reach you even when it would not be possible anymore
- A channel to say what you would otherwise not dare to say

### CHRONICLES

Chronicles for everyone, only certain ones and oneself should help to commemorate a person. During the time one lives, one collects memories and experiences, these one archives in the chronicles. A chronicle can be edited or created by many or only one person and serves to remember.

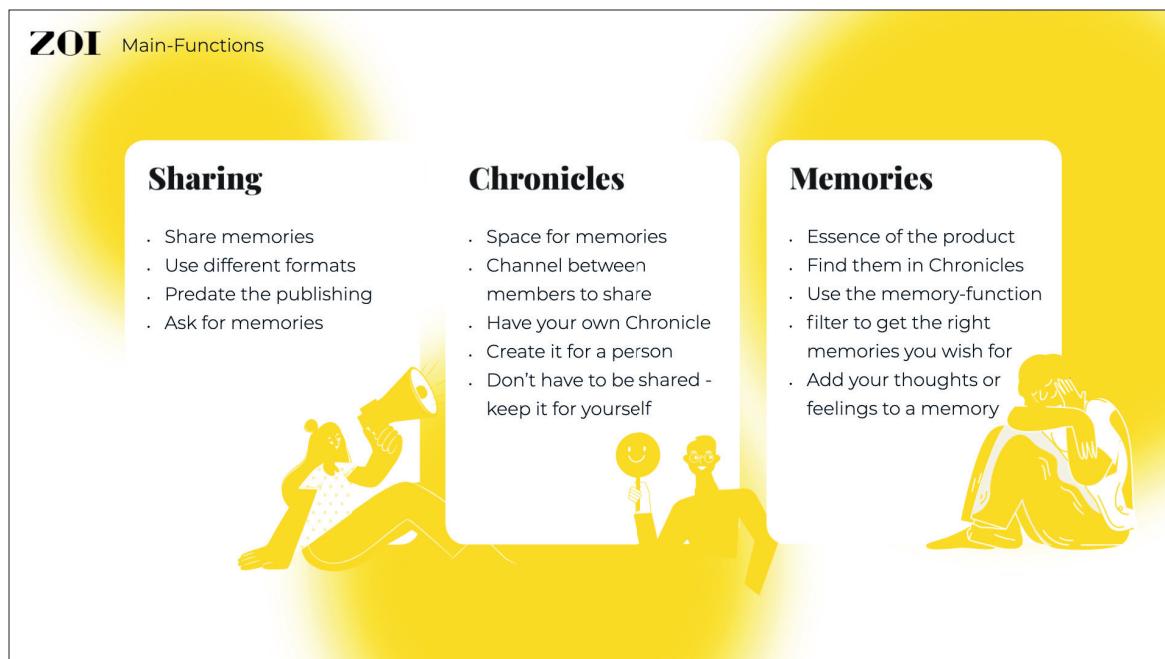
- Chronicles for all from the dead
- Chronicles for all from the relatives
- Chronicle for a specific person from the dead
- Cronk for a particular person, whether dead or living in the same.

By adding media and things with which one wants to remember the other person, one designs a memorial page freely according to one's wishes and ideas. A print function turns the Chronicle into a physical product in no time, which can be downloaded.

### MEMORIES

Memories, serve to cope with grief and are an optimal way to remember a deceased person again. In this process, content used either through the Chronicle or in the exchange is taken and „shown“ to the person little by little, as in a presentation. During the showing, different tasks and exercises are shown to the respective contents; these should lead to the fact that memories can be catalogued better and thus can be determined better what is to be remembered.

- serves the cataloguing of memories while remembering
- it makes cataloguing more vivid
- random mode / gallery mode / specific memories



### ZOI - MAIN FUNCTIONS

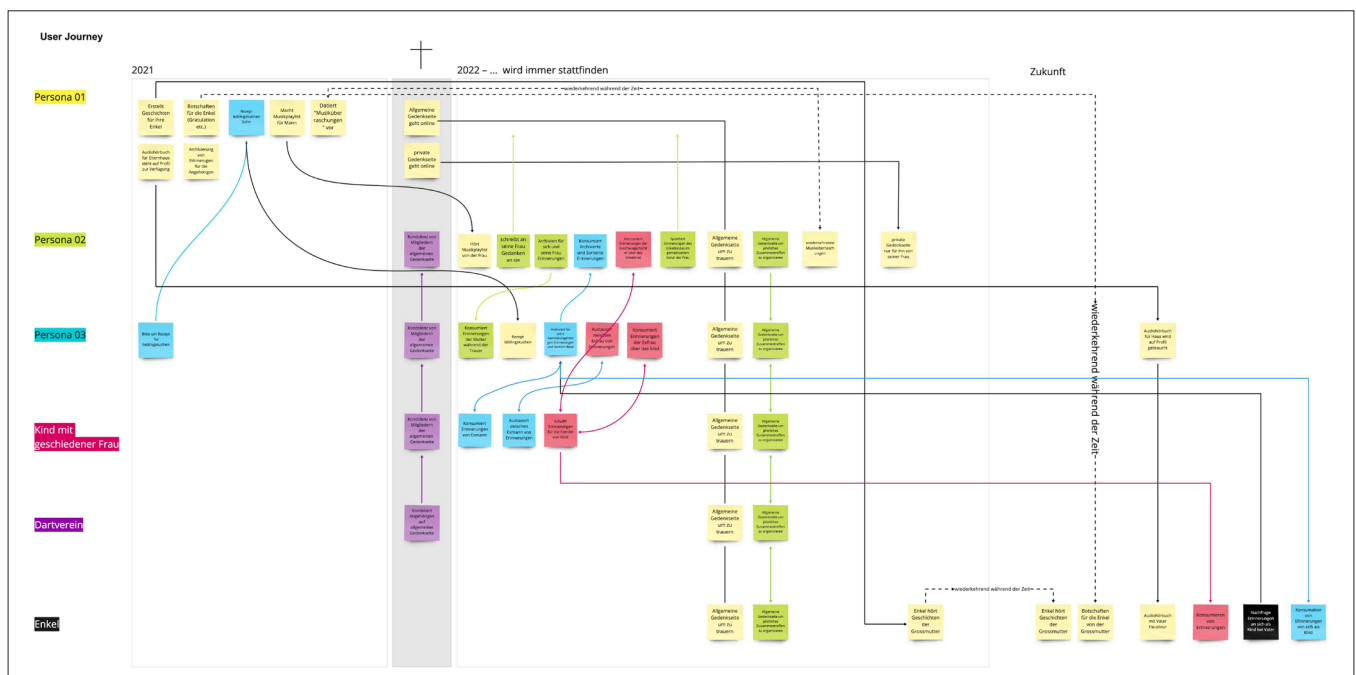
An image with the 3 main functions of the service and the details of it.

### 3. USER JOURNEY

Designing the user journey for a product meant to function over long-term use needed to be clear on how the service would work when used over the years. With the help of the personas, I wanted to show which relationships and functions would be used and thus found a way to include the elementary functions in the user journey. The time period extends over at least three years and continues into the distant future, in which one can see the effects of the decisions and preparations made in the past. The Journey begins with Doris Müller thinking about how she will still be able to maintain contact with her surviving relatives after her imminent death from cancer and how she will be able to communicate things to her still unborn grandchildren that would otherwise be lost.

For her husband, she selects pieces of music to be released on various occasions and dates to surprise him and relive shared moments. For her grandchildren, she creates messages and records stories via video message, in which she paraphrases their lives in her own words and tells things that are essential for them to understand. It is essential that her grandchildren know who she was and what her views were regarding life and her family members. Her son receives a post on his first birthday after

her death containing the recipe for his favourite cake, which she treasured all her life. In general, the members of her dart club use the opportunity to condole on the family's public memorial page and write shared moments in the guestbook. The club members do not have access to the content that only the family has access to. The Müller family owns an old farmhouse, which comes from the family of Doris, the grandmother who died of cancer. To ensure that the house's history is preserved and not lost, Doris has recorded audio recordings that can be played at specific locations in the house to convey the story. Through shared channels and archiving family members together, new memories are continually added, enriching the memory for everyone equally. Dominik Müller, the husband and grandfather, uses the opportunity in the shared channel with his wife, which is not visible to outsiders, to scream and share his thoughts with her to simply get rid of it but to have a kind of diary of his emotional state. Every year, the general public memorial page invites people to the annual memorial service and then shares the pictures taken and thanks people for coming.



### USER JOURNEY MAP

There is a better solution of this image following this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XotkukgxkqpViK3xk6S0qln1r3r41ppc/view?usp=sharing>

#### 4. USER FLOW

Starting from five navigation points, the content is reached through different links, often referring to the same content. This is because, in this way, content can be reached faster, more orderly, and more efficiently. Persons are only found by searching for them with a key number. There is no name search. This is to prevent privacy from being compromised and to let users know that only select users have access to the content they create. Overall, this is important because very private things are published, and the security of privacy is necessary for this. If you have requested a person and he has confirmed the request and acquaintance, it is now possible to create a channel. Thereby you have the option to create a shared channel or to create a channel, which is directed to this person, but this

person does not get this.

In case of this person's death, it is also possible to create a general official page accessible to all, a memorial page. Who is allowed to make a memorial page is based on the person who dies or who has been commissioned to do so. The contents are shared in so-called chronicles. If in a chronicle is a content. I would like to have it in another chronicle, I can, through the function „save in chronicle“, That in another chronicle. If you want to look more closely at a memory, it is possible to see it in a separate area. In this area, you can select which memories you can see and have the possibility to see a slide-show of them. Since at any time you have the opportunity to save more detailed information about a memory, it can be better assigned later.

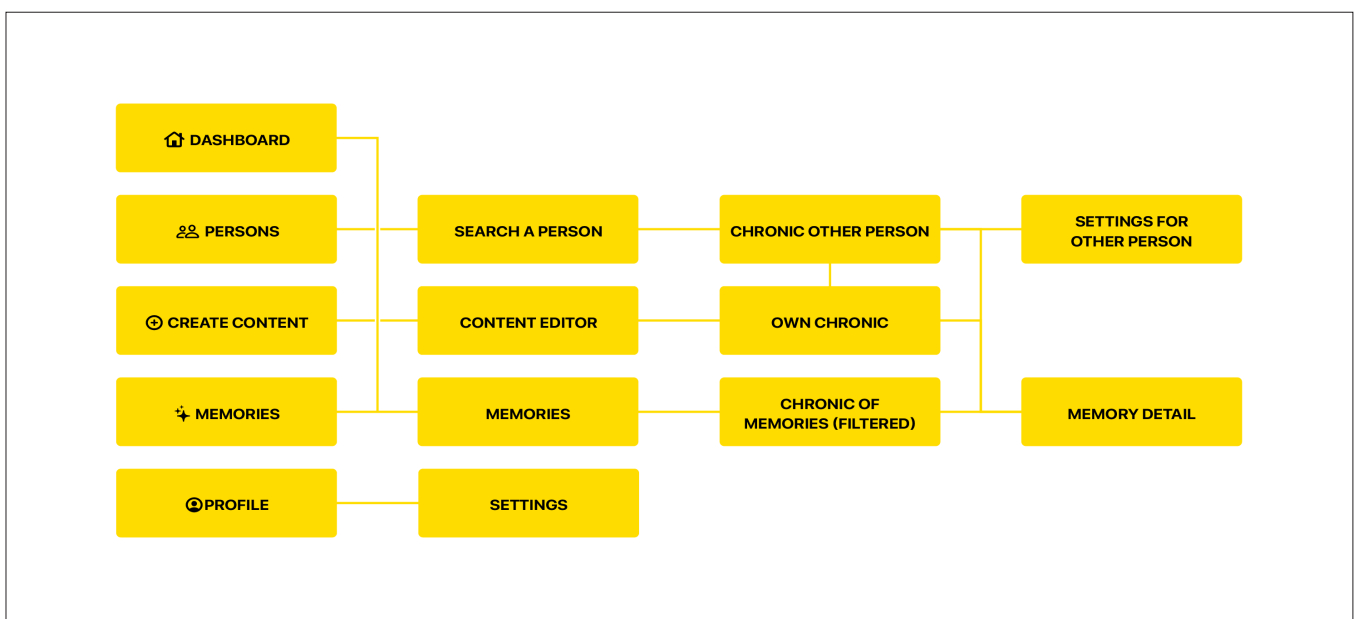


IMAGE OF THE USER FLOW

## 5. PROTOTYPE

The prototype is clickable and can present the most important functions and screens which are essential to understand the project. The color yellow is used for reasons to lead the users eyes or bring attention to things which are important. Microani-

mations appearing by using the app should create a better understanding what happens and should let the interaction in the app appear more fluent and natural.

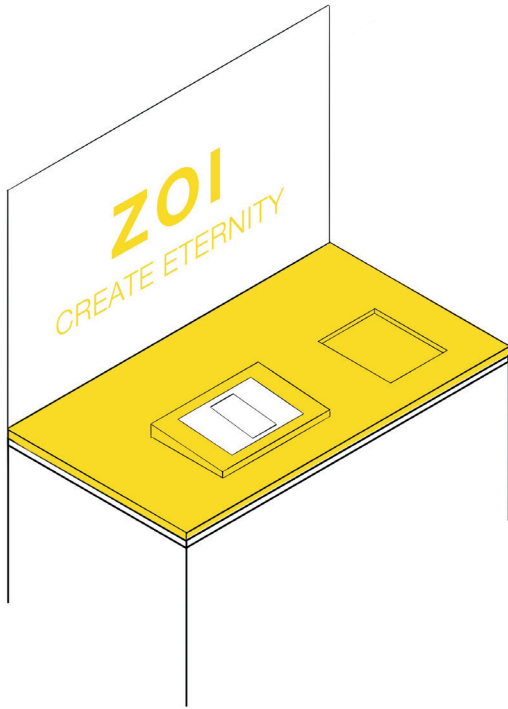


### EXAMPLE SCREENS OF THE PROTOTYPE

Four Images represent the Prototype. The first one is the welcoming screen appearing when you open the app. The second one shows the dashboard the third shows the chronicles where you can choose where you want to go. The last screen shows a memory screen in detail.

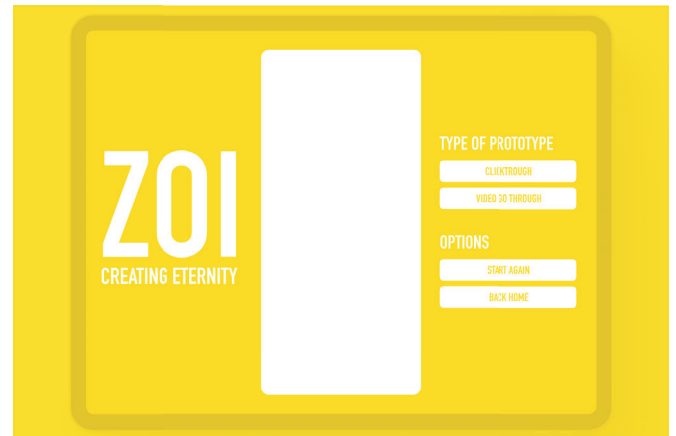
## 6. EXHIBITION CONCEPT

For the exhibition concept, I have Ipad to show the prototype. You can choose if you want to click-through or just want to look a video going through the prototype.



CONCEPT DRAWING OF EXHIBITION CONCEPT

On the table you can have a look at the thesis laying next to the Ipad as shown in the image below. In the Background you can see the name of the project and a short description of it. A monitor shows the animation in a loop.



## IPAD MOCKUP OF THE PROTOTYPE

Iphone Prototype in the middle of the screen and on the sides Options to controlle which type of prototype you want to use.



## 7. VIDEO CONCEPT

For the Video I decided to make an animation because I was scared a video would look like to dark and maybe would make a pathetic impression seeing the mourning people. Another point speaking for the animation was, that I have a lot better possibility to show the difference between

the already passed and the still living persons. For the living persons I decided to take the corporate color yellow to be filled in the places where shadow would be.

The animation tells the story of a grandmother still taking place in the lives of her bereaved ones by being present through the possibilities ZOI offers.



### EXAMPLE IMAGE OUT OF THE VIDEO

Four Images represent the Prototype. The first one is the welcoming screen appearing when you open the app. The second one shows the dashboard the third shows the chronicles where you can choose where you want to go. The last screen shows a memory screen in detail.



# IX. CONCLUSION

## 1. CONCLUSION

The topics of life and death remain complex subjects. Even a project will not be able to change this. The appreciation of life and the fear, or even disgust of death, are firmly anchored in our westernised society and cannot or should not simply be wished away. If I have learned anything, it is that our experiences shape us and make us grow. Even unpleasant experiences have to accompany us so that we know to deal with them. It seems essential that when things change and take their natural course, we remain flexible and do not fail to adapt. The way of dealing with death and life has changed in recent times, adapting to the needs of our present time. How we grieve today is different from the past. Something that remains is the perception of loss and longing. Grieving is very individual and should be done casually at one's own pace and methods.

Memories play a crucial role in processing a loss and can be used to satisfy the longing for a loved one. No longer living does not have to mean completely disappearing from the lives of those you leave behind. The things necessary to give a dying person a sense of security and a feeling of closure are very individual. They differ not only from person to person but also depending on their relationships with each other. It can be stated that with the loss of a person, not only the memories of that person disappear, but also their intellectual property. Unfortunately, we often only become aware of this when it is too late.

Today we have the opportunity to capture things and moments that we do not want to miss. The decisive stuff that we appreciate in a person is those we notice because we know the person and learn to read and interpret. To perceive these things without the person's presence is possible if we remember them and reawaken them in our consciousness. Avoiding and repressing thoughts of a missing person can be helpful for a short time, but it is not a suitable way to deal with it in the long run. Grief becomes easier in most cases, and the possibility and longing diminish with time. Memories become less painful, and confronting the loss is easier. It is essential to nurture and maintain a relationship with a missing person so that it can become something from which to draw strength. Memories let us immerse ourselves in moments, revive them and make things like time and death insignificant.

Everyone dies, including ourselves, and what seems unreal in a moment can quickly become a reality. We cannot choose when we die, but we can decide which things we want to leave behind and to whom we will leave what. Items that are important to us may be of little importance to others and vice versa,

so it is important to think about what you are leaving or want to leave behind. The maintenance of contact after the loss of a person becomes multidimensional when not only the missing party addresses the missing one in a searching way, but a typical exchange can take place. Just the intention behind reporting to the bereaved person can be comforting. The opportunity to express our appreciation for a person by showing them that we value the moments shared can be exhilarating and important to us when we are not well.

A platform that allows to save, create and share moments provides a lot of help where it is urgently needed and becomes a part of the interpersonal relationship and engagement with a person. To stay on a level of familiarity, contact requests are made through personal inquiry, creating the opportunity from the beginning to think about the other person and why you would want to add them.

The needs of involved people vary widely and fluctuate, even for the same person, depending on their relationship with another person. The difficulty is to find a compromise between maintaining as much individuality as possible and the feasibility of a solution. It is also possible to satisfy everyone's wishes if a service can be implemented understandably.

The importance of everyone meeting their own needs without disregarding the needs of another is something that we as a society have yet to learn. Through the insights I was able to gain from the interviews, the podcasts, the videos and surveys, it became clear to me that everyone can handle such situations differently and has to decide what is best for them. To achieve this, it is crucial to communicate what you need on an equal footing and not be judged for it even if traditions or customs can thus not be observed. The health of the bereaved is paramount, and they are the ones who have to live with the loss, which is why I think more attention should be paid to their wishes as well.

It is challenging to get people to answer questions about topics considered „too private“ in our society or deal with a heavy subject. I have often been looked at with a puzzled face and asked why I am dealing with such a „difficult/ba/funny“ topic. I cannot say. The frequency shows me one thing above all, how strong the taboo of the topic of death and loss is and the associated urgency to do something for the fact that although these topics are taboo, nevertheless a way is found, which makes it possible without fear and terror to think about the necessary thoughts to show that this fear is unfounded.

## **2. CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF INTERACTION DESIGN**

What contribution I have made to interaction design is not easy to determine, as so many things come together in such a project. The way we interact with our fellow human beings is not always optimal, and it is difficult to determine the reasons for this. In summary, however, it is safe to assume that with an awareness of what others mean to us and how vital our fellow human beings are to us, clarity is also gained about how important it is for others to realise what value they have in our lives. I think with the work, I created a possibility to communicate to our dearest fellow human beings what we appreciate about them and how much we value them. This kind of communication is more reserved and thoughtful but also creates a common level between two who want to show affection without getting too sentimental. Another way of interaction is given by the opportunity to interact with a person who has already passed. Communication and maintaining contact with a deceased person create an opportunity for interaction that should be preserved at all costs.

The animated exchange with a deceased person depends on the participation of both sides, otherwise, the interaction degenerates one-dimensionally and dies of non-response.

## **3. FUTURE STEPS**

I could well imagine a further development of the application. The possibility of benefiting from a service like this is significant, so pursuing it could be substantial.

Next, the design and development of the application would certainly make sense. User testing and further iteration loops to find out what features need to be improved and changed and in which way is essential. More surveys and interviews with stakeholders could clarify which aspects are working and need further attention. For further development, the expertise of other professionals would be of great benefit in identifying and addressing deficits. Many questions still need to be answered, so I think that an interdisciplinary team would be most suitable.



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