# XCSmart midterm report feedback

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The project group states that they want to research the following question:

How can social collaboration through mobile technology increase users' knowledge about the technical aspects of cross-country skiing?

In order to answer they aim to build a system for peer to peer sharing of various information regarding current skiing conditions, and recommendations on how to prepare skis for optimal performance in these conditions. The team wants to adopt a user centric approach to the design process in order to design a solution for all skiers.

In order to narrow down the initial requirements the preliminary quantitative data collection is done in form of a survey targeted to skiers aged between 20 and 30 of both genders. Qualitative data is collected through open interviews from people the team knows to be active skiers at different levels of competency.

**Good points:**

1. Very good surveys and interviews in order to understand requirements. The team has done well in gathering data and finding relevant literature to their topic of choice. Initial analysis has strengthened the evidence from Holone & Herstad that most users want to get information rather than share it. It also seems like the most urgent issue is how to wax the skis properly.

2. Great review of related research.While mostly good, some of the referenced literature relevance to the study was a little bit difficult to understand from the description in the document. It would be helpful if the referenced literature was brought more into context.

3. Great idea to crowdsource information among users. Narrowing down the user group in order to build a suitable solution for a limited group of users is a good design principle. Time to market and initial cost is minimized. Also building something you would personally be interested in using is one of the best principles for product development.

4. The general structure of the report is good, and it is clear that quite a lot of effort has been put into the work so far. It is apparent that the will to design something, and use principles learned throughout the design program, is very strong.

**Ambitous plans**

The timing of the project might not be optimal as it is very unlikely that skiing conditions will come in time for the deadline of the project so that a conclusion to the research question can be reached.

Also it is extremely ambitious to run an iterative user centric design process for an application within the given timeframe and do follow up research, especially when

the application is dependent on overcoming user reluctance to share the data the system needs in order to be useful.

### Knocking in open doors?

For many years there has been information available for all levels of users on the internet with regards to technical aspects of skiing on sites like www.langrenn.com run by elite skiers and their support team, and from vendors like www.swix.no. It might be that gaining knowledge about a topic might be more pertinent in some cases than relying on social media.

### Opposing cultural myths

It might also be argued that cross country skiing represents a nostalgic idea about the human against the nature. This strange romantic notion is seen in solo adventures across desolate and distant places. Both for the skier seeking experience with nature, and in a training setting skiing is seen as a personal endeavor.

On the other side there is a long tradition of family trips on skis especially during winter holidays and weekends, so this supports a case for investigating whether a social app can be beneficial for learning about the technical aspects of skiing.