Reel Life vs. Real Life: How Software Developers Share their Daily Life through Vlogs
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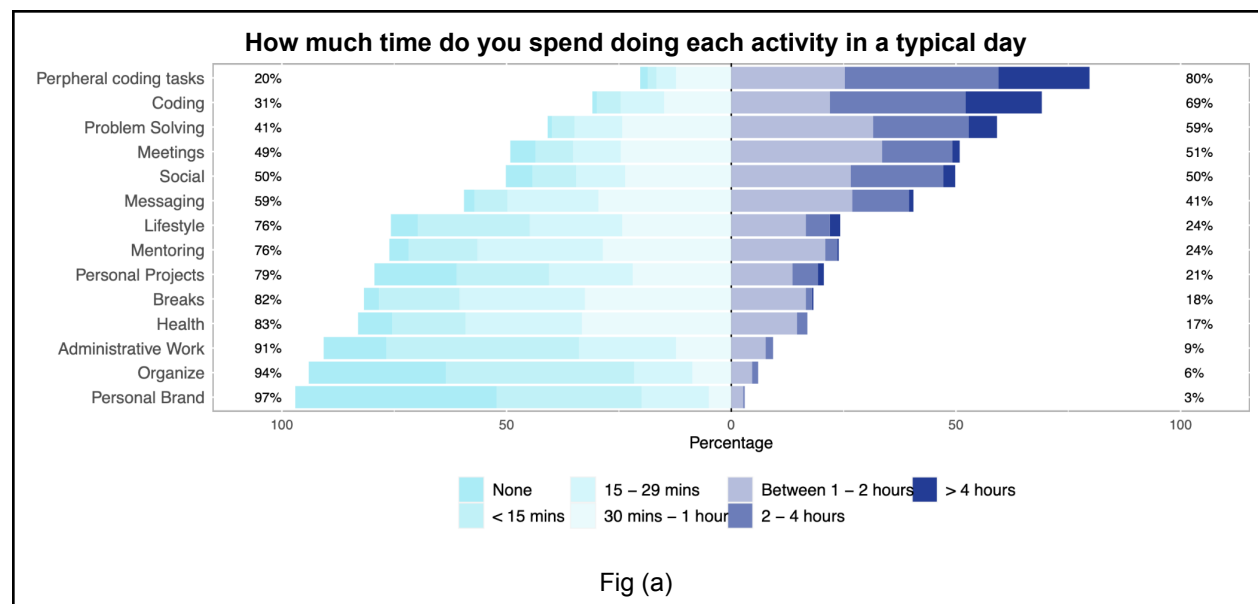
Supplementary analysis:
Comparison of self-time and others-time reported for different activities in a day
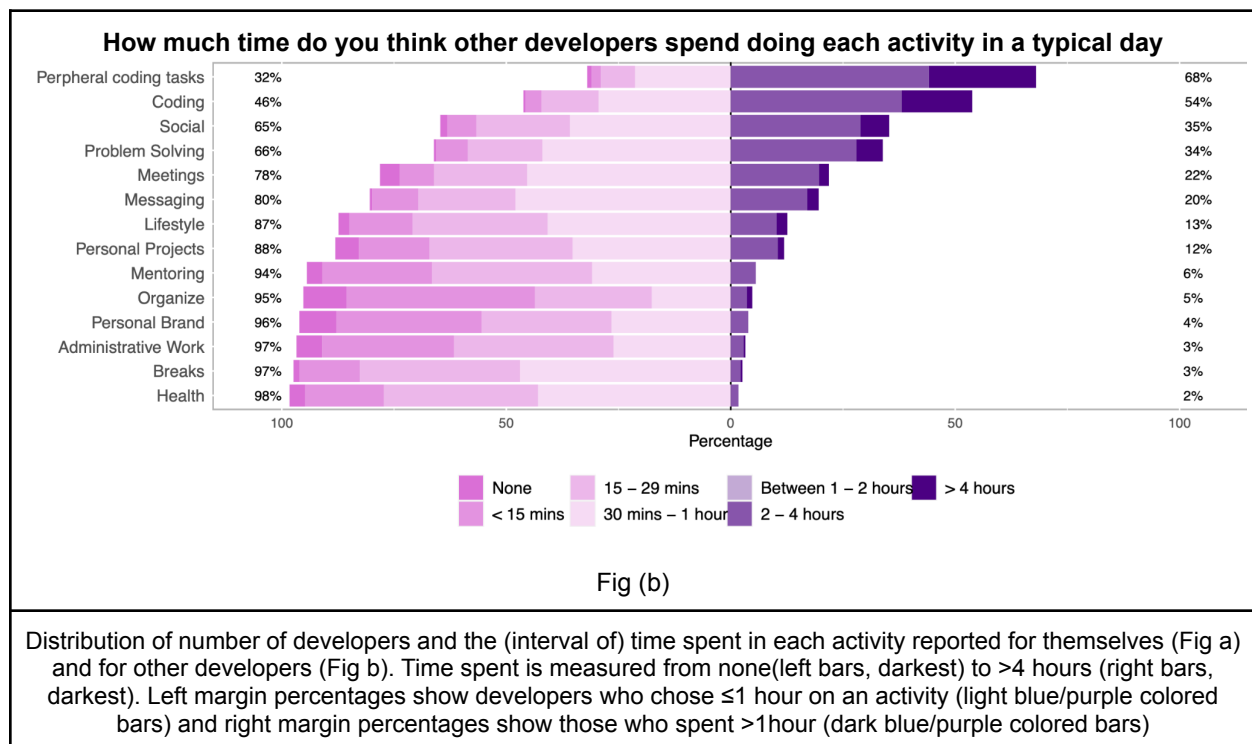
We conducted a survey with 335 developers at a large software company (LSC) to understand the common activities they engage in throughout the day. The survey focused on the online presence of software developers. Several questions were centered around a list of 14 activities that developers do during a day in their life. Each activity is described in detail in the paper.

The survey consisted of three parts. The first part consisted of demographic questions, including questions about general social media usage. The second part asked developers how much time they spend doing each activity, and then how much time they think ``other developers'' spend doing each of those activities.

The paper discusses the interpretations of how developers report they spend time in various activities during the day. Here we discuss the similarities and differences between how developers report their typical activities and how they perceive other developers like their colleagues spend their day.

We hypothesized that developers' reports about the time they spend would differ from their perceptions of that of their colleagues. Through these differences, we expected to study the diversity of personalities of how unique developers think they are and how vlogs can be used to inform/support them. However, the overall distribution of time spent in activity is very similar.

How much time do you spend doing each activity in a typical day

Activity	Self %	Others %
Perpheral coding tasks	20%	80%
Coding	31%	69%
Problem Solving	41%	59%
Meetings	49%	51%
Social	50%	50%
Messaging	59%	41%
Lifestyle	76%	24%
Mentoring	76%	24%
Personal Projects	79%	21%
Breaks	82%	18%
Health	83%	17%
Administrative Work	91%	9%
Organize	94%	6%
Personal Brand	97%	3%

Legend: None, < 15 mins, 15 – 29 mins, 30 mins – 1 hour, Between 1 – 2 hours, 2 – 4 hours, > 4 hours

Fig (a)

How much time do you think other developers spend doing each activity in a typical day

Fig (b)

Distribution of number of developers and the (interval of) time spent in each activity reported for themselves (Fig a) and for other developers (Fig b). Time spent is measured from none(left bars, darkest) to >4 hours (right bars, darkest). Left margin percentages show developers who chose ≤1 hour on an activity (light blue/purple colored bars) and right margin percentages show those who spent >1hour (dark blue/purple colored bars)

Developers reported they themselves spend more time on all of the 14 activities compared to their colleagues. We hypothesize that this perception comes from developers' work from home situation as the study was conducted during the COVID-19 quarantine period. As developers had no in-person day to day observation of how their colleagues were spending the day, we posit developers perceived that they spent more time on everything compared to other developers, regardless of the type of activity.

When comparing the order of activities they spend the most to least time on compared to other developers, developers thought they spent less time on social activities like spending time with friends and family (5th most time spent on an activity) compared to other developers (3rd most time spent on an activity). On the other hand, developers believed they spent more time on their health (4th least time spent on an activity) compared to other developers (least time spent on an activity).

Overall, we found that developers mostly believe their time spent in activities is similar to other developers across every activity, just in lesser amounts. Further studies need to be conducted to understand the diversity of developer personality based on activities they engage in from day to day.