BETTER SUPER THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

An evaluation of the ‘Cado Superbot’

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** .......................................................................................................................... 1-3

1. **INTRODUCTION** ................................................................................................................................. 4

2. **EVALUATION OBJECTIVES** ............................................................................................................... 5

3. **METHODOLOGY** ................................................................................................................................. 6

4. **EVALUATION FINDINGS** .................................................................................................................... 7

  4.1 **DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUPERBOT** ........................................................................................... 7
  4.2 **MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE SUPERBOT** ................................................................. 9
  4.3 **TOTAL USAGE** ............................................................................................................................... 11
  4.4 **USER REACTIONS TO THE SUPERBOT** ....................................................................................... 12
  4.5 **EDUCATIVE VALUE OF THE SUPERBOT** ..................................................................................... 15
  4.6 **PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE SUPERBOT** ..................................................................................... 17
  4.7 **BEHAVIOUR CHANGE BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE SUPERBOT** ............................................... 19
  4.8 **SUPER FOR NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS** ......................................................................... 20
  4.9 **OTHER INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INCLUDE** .............................................. 21
  4.10 **COST BENEFIT** ............................................................................................................................ 22

5. **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS** ............................................................................................ 24
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction
CHOICE secured grant funding from Financial Literacy Australia (FLA) to implement the Better Super Through Technology program. The program was informed by prior research conducted by CHOICE and others that shows that young people’s understanding of the superannuation system is lacking, resulting in a large amount of ‘lost super’ and disengagement from the superannuation system. Women who take time out of the workforce to care for their young children can see their superannuation contributions stall for many years resulting in poorer outcomes in retirement. Past research also shows that information provided by superannuation fund providers and government generally fails to resonate with people and does little to inspire a pattern of better decision-making.

The program entailed the development of an interactive digital decision-making tool, or ‘chat bot’ to be embedded into Facebook Messenger, with the potential for placement on a variety of other platforms. The tool was to be targeted to the needs of young adults (19-30 year olds) and new mothers. The chat bot was developed through an iterative process of user testing and sought to educate users about the benefits of taking an interest in superannuation, minimising the fees paid on superannuation holdings and continuing to make superannuation payments throughout times spent out of the workforce (eg after child birth). The chat bot encouraged people to visit the MyGov website and to consolidate superannuation accounts if there were multiple accounts in existence.

To make it engaging, various options were considered for the ‘personality’ to give to the chat bot. The selected character was Cado, a talking avocado. The intention was to capitalise on a public debate sparked by comments made by demographer Bernard Salt, that young people (millennials) would be better able to save for a house if they spent less on smashed avocado at breakfast. The chat bot can be viewed at https://www.facebook.com/cadobot/

The chat bot was promoted via the following channels:

- Two Electronic Direct Mailouts (EDMs) to the CHOICE campaign supporter database of around 120,000 people.
- Six waves of paid Facebook ads targeting people according to age, gender and interests
- Links placed on the homepage of the CHOICE website for a one week period
- An article published by CHOICE on ethical superannuation funds
A News Limited syndicated story on the benefits of consolidating superannuation funds.

**Evaluation objectives and methods**
Inca Consulting was engaged by CHOICE to conduct an independent evaluation of the Better Super Through Technology program. The main objectives of the evaluation were to determine the degree to which the chat bot reached and engaged the target audience, the educative value of the chat bot and the ability of the chat bot to encourage people to take steps to better manage their superannuation.

The evaluation of the program entailed, among other things:

- Facilitation of a prototype testing session (with 20 university students)
- An online survey of 592 chat bot users
- In-depth telephone interviews with 28 chat bot users
- Analysis of Facebook diagnostics and other available data.

**Summary of evaluation results**
By 28 February 2018, 2,035 people had accessed the Superbot, fulfilling the undertaking to FLA to attract at least 2,000 users. Over 300,000 people were reached through the advertising and other promotions. The ‘hit rate’ in terms of getting people to interact with the Superbot is around 1% - comparable to other online campaigns run by CHOICE.

Based on Facebook Ad Manager demographics, 56% of all users were male and 44% were female. Around two thirds were aged 18-24 years and one third 25-30 years. The targeting was more successful for a younger, male audience. During the latter campaign bursts, women were more heavily targeted to increase numbers.

The feedback from users – through the various prototypes and the final product – was generally very positive. While the communication style was not everyone’s ‘cup of tea’, most people appreciated the effort to make the subject matter interesting and fun. The chat bot seemed to strike the right balance between irreverence and formality. It was clear that the humorous approach of Cado capitalised in a positive way on the controversial characterisation of young people as ‘money wasters’. Many people commented that the approach was refreshing and 89% of people said that it was a better way to provide the information than the usual approaches.

Importantly, the chat bot had a demonstrable educational value. One quarter of all users said that they now understand a lot more about superannuation and a further 32% said they understand it a bit more. A majority of 54% said that they would take more interest
in their super in future (with 37% saying that they already took an interest). As indicators of the chat bot’s ability to engage people, these results are very positive.

The chat bot also had significant practical value. Half (49%) of all users said that they visited the MyGov website while using the chat bot. A significant 9% of all users said that they consolidated multiple superannuation accounts and some others said that they could see multiple accounts but wanted to do some more research before consolidating. Some 11% said that they were now making more voluntary contributions to their super and 56% said that they were thinking about doing so. A large 62% of people reported other actions in terms of discussing the issues with family and friends, speaking to a financial planner or their superannuation fund manager or using available calculators to explore different retirement scenarios. Again, these results are all very positive indicators of the effectiveness of the tool.

Based on work done by the Productivity Commission, consolidating multiple superannuation accounts results in people being, on average, $51,000 better off at retirement. The per ‘consolidator’ cost of the entire Superbot project was just $1,333 – clearly a good return on investment.

Although it seems clear that the chat bot was highly effective, the challenge of promoting it and getting people to use it is significant. The efforts made by CHOICE to promote the tool yielded the target number of users but a time extension and more precise targeting of the advertising was required to achieve this. The paid Facebook advertising was the most effective in driving uptake but needed to reach a very large number of people to attract users.

Throughout the development process, it was clear that there was some distrust of the Facebook Messenger medium due to the prevalence of financial and identity theft scams. Although some measures were put in place to put people’s minds at ease, it is likely that this remained a barrier to use. Most people who used the chat bot thought it was trustworthy but the degree to which suspicion acted as a barrier is unknown.

In summary, the chat bot is a highly effective and age-appropriate communications tool that has the potential to educate and to provide a significant financial benefit to users in retirement. The evaluation supports a case for further development of the tool and for wider promotion.
1. INTRODUCTION

CHOICE, Australia’s leading consumer organisation, secured grant funding from Financial Literacy Australia (FLA) to implement the Better Super Through Technology program. The program entailed the development of an interactive digital decision-making tool, or ‘chat bot’ to be embedded into social media platforms with the potential for placement on a variety of other platforms. The tool was to be targeted to the needs of young adults (19-30 year olds) and new mothers. Facebook Messenger was chosen as the preferred platform as Facebook is the most popular social media network and has integrated chat bot capability.

The program has been informed by a significant volume of prior research conducted by CHOICE and others. This past research has shown that young adults are vulnerable in the sense that their understanding of the superannuation system is lacking, resulting in a large amount of ‘lost super’ and disengagement from the superannuation system during their early years of employment. Women who take time out of the workforce to care for their young children can see their superannuation contributions stall for many years resulting in poorer outcomes in retirement. The developmental research conducted by CHOICE (Project Superpower) found that many people lack an understanding of the basic features of the superannuation system and that this represented a major barrier to engagement.

The Project Superpower research\(^1\) found, among other things, that information provided by superannuation fund providers and government generally fails to resonate with people and does little to inspire a pattern of better decision-making. The research also found that people are looking for ‘the answers’ in the form of simple tips and strategies provided by an independent, impartial partner, rather than large volumes of information. The research concluded that the concept of superannuation needed to be ‘reframed’ in a way that was likely to engage rather than confuse people; that moves them away from a ‘head in the sand’ approach to taking control of their future.

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\(^1\) 2016. Project Superpower: informing a strategy to engage with people with their superannuation. Research commissioned by CHOICE.
2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

CHOICE engaged Inca Consulting to undertake research and draw together evaluative information to examine the effectiveness of the pilot and to refine the tool and the way it is promoted. Specifically, the evaluation examined the following questions:

- Has the intervention increased confidence in decision-making about superannuation?
- How many people participated in the pilot? How effective was the messaging in reaching the target demographics?
- Are new/expectant mothers confident that they’ve taken steps to mitigate time out of the workforce?
- Has the tool lead to demonstrated behavioural change? (e.g. number of people who consolidated accounts)
- Were there any unintended consequences (positive or negative)? If so, what were they?
- What was the cost per participant for the pilot?
- Which recruitment strategy was most cost-efficient? (e.g. targeted social media, media placement, leveraged public campaigning, distribution channel testing)
- What is the cost per participant versus the immediate savings from account consolidation?
- What is the cost per participant to up-scale the pilot to reach more people or broader demographics?
- Have the messages identified through the research been effective in reaching the target demographics?
- What was the efficacy of the timing of messages (e.g. tax time versus non-tax time)
- What can CHOICE learn from these engagement strategies (e.g. digital tool and targeted messaging for younger and new/expectant mother consumers)?
- If the program was continued, what aspects should stay the same and what should be changed (design, implementation, partnerships, messaging and timing of messages)?
3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation made use of the following methods:

- familiarisation with the strategy and intended approach through face-to-face meetings and ongoing liaison with the CHOICE team.
- participation in a prototype testing session with 20 UTS Bachelor of Technology and Innovation students and review of both verbal and written feedback.
- further prototype testing with 31 UTS students – a link to the Superbot was emailed to participants and their feedback obtained via an online survey.
- in-depth telephone interviews with 19 young people. These people were recruited via an established market research database. People were sent an email link to the Superbot and given a few days to interact with it. Follow up interviews (around 20 minutes) were undertaken using a discussion guide included at Appendix A.
- an online survey of 592 Superbot users. At the completion of their interaction with the tool, users were invited to participate in a feedback survey by simply following a link. An incentive was offered in the form of a chance to win one of three $100 gift vouchers. The response rate was 29%. A hard copy version of the survey is included at Appendix B.
- follow up telephone interviews with 9 women who had interacted with the Superbot content regarding superannuation for new mothers and who provided their contact details.
- analysis of Facebook Messenger statistics and other materials relating to the promotion of the Superbot (supplied by CHOICE).
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Development of the Superbot

The ‘chat bot’ (relabelled the ‘Superbot’ for the purposes of this project) was developed by the CHOICE New Things team, with assistance provided by games designer Alex Ocias and writer Leena van Deventer. The intention was to use a medium and communication style that would be highly engaging for young people. While the main aim was to provide some key messages about superannuation, the strategy was to communicate in a fun, humorous and irreverent way in the hope that the messages would be more readily received by young people.

Australian animator Chris Voigt, who has an established YouTube following, was commissioned to create and animate the identity for the Superbot. The selected character was Cado, a talking avocado. The intention was to capitalise on a public debate sparked by comments made by demographer Bernard Salt, that young people (millennials) would be better able to save for a house if they spent less on smashed avocado at breakfast.

The Superbot was developed through an iterative process. The first prototype was tested on CHOICE staff who met the target criteria and a class of UTS Bachelor of Technology & Innovation students. A second iteration was tested with a group of students from the University of Technology Hatchery program (an entrepreneurship program). A third round of user testing was undertaken more formally with a group of 19 people aged 18-30 years, recruited from the general community. The feedback from these various sources helped to validate the general approach but also highlighted some things that were addressed in subsequent iterations. The main findings of the prototype testing were as follows:

- Even the early prototypes had an impact in terms of directing people to the MyGov website and prompting them to consolidate their superannuation accounts.
- The use of humorous characters, jokes and colloquial language was generally effective but could be divisive. While one person might find the approach entertaining, the next person might find it annoying. The character used in the early prototypes and the constant stream of jokes seemed to annoy or alienate too many people - it was clear that it was important to not ‘overdo it’.
- There were a few technical issues. A number of people tried to type in responses which caused the Superbot to restart. This issue was dealt with by disabling free text input across the bot. This limited user interaction via selecting from a range of pre-determined responses. There was also a glitch where the user response buttons covered up some of the dialogue box. These issues were addressed in subsequent iterations.
• A couple of people also said the pacing of the Superbot’s dialog was a bit too fast, meaning they had to keep scrolling back up the page. The pacing of the bot was adjusted so that pauses were added between sentences to improve readability.

• Trust was a significant issue and clearly the largest barrier to using the Superbot. People often said that they would be wary of the Superbot, particularly if circulated via Facebook. Users were very aware of Facebook scams and efforts to steal personal information. The colloquial language used from the outset rang alarm bells for some people.

• As people used the Superbot however, their level of comfort increased. Some better explanatory information and a more formal way of ‘on boarding’ people was required. Following are some quotes to demonstrate the concerns that some people had:

  “Talking about financial issues through messenger feels a little risky. Although it’s not sharing any private information, I guess messenger doesn’t feel like the most secure platform and does limit the discussion.”

  “Because there is a lot of colloquial language used I’d question whether it was spam. I think it needs to be slightly formal at first. Just say “I’m here to help you with super.”

  “There are too many scams happening nowadays and as long as a bot doesn’t ask sensitive information like the MyGov number, taxation number, superannuation ID number, etc, it could be trustworthy.”

The ‘trust’ issue was addressed in the final Superbot by adding the (trusted) CHOICE name and logo on the Facebook page along with a link to the CHOICE privacy policy.

The iterative development process, using multiple rounds of user testing, helped to refine the overall theme of the Superbot, its functionality, some of the key messages and the mechanisms for generating trust in the communication medium. In terms of the overall success of the project, the careful development process was important.
4.2 Marketing and promotion of the Superbot

The Superbot was promoted via the CHOICE campaign supporter database of around 120,000 people. Two Electronic Direct Mailouts (EDMs) were undertaken to alert people to the problem of paying fees on multiple superannuation accounts. The EDMs directed people to the Superbot available through Facebook Messenger. An excerpt of one of the EDMs is presented below:

**HANDS OFF MY SMASHED AVOCADO**

**THE FIGHT FOR FAIRER SUPERANNUATION**

**We’re on a mission to solve the superannuation crisis among young people. Can you help?**

A massive 40% of Australians have multiple super accounts with young people among the worst impacted from paying multiple fees on their fledgling savings.

For most young people, dealing with superannuation falls into the too hard basket - the system seems stacked against them. Super and insurance companies benefit, making a motza from fees across duplicate accounts.

That’s why we’ve created a free Facebook tool to talk people through combining the duplicate superannuation accounts step-by-step. CADO, the cheeky avocado robot named after millennials infamous love of smashed avocado toast, is 100% independent and built by the CHOICE team.

Can you forward this email to young people you know who might have extra super accounts.
In addition, six waves of Facebook ads were placed with a combined reach of 316,267 people – these are detailed below.

23 - 28 Nov 2017

21 - 25 Nov 2017

21 - 28 Nov 2017

8 - 23 Dec 2017

17 - 21 Dec 2017 and 19 - 22 Jan 2018

9 - 22 Jan 2018
The Facebook advertising campaign was directed to Australian males and females aged 18-30 years. The Facebook advertising was also targeted to people based on their interests as identified through their Facebook interactions and profile.

Links to the Superbot were also placed on the homepage of the CHOICE website for a one week period at the time of the launch and remains available via the campaigns section of the CHOICE website (https://campaigns.choice.com.au/super/). A link to the Superbot was also made available via an article published by CHOICE on ethical superannuation funds (https://www.choice.com.au/money/financial-planning-and-investing/superannuation/articles/ethical-super-gains-ground).

CHOICE also prepared some research to contribute to a News Limited syndicated story on the benefits of consolidating superannuation funds, compared with the cost of eating out for breakfast. News Limited publication guidelines did not however allow reference to a link to the Facebook Messenger Superbot. Consequently, only a small amount of traffic to the Superbot of Facebook page was generated.

The early promotion of the Superbot was less effective than expected, resulting in fewer users of the Superbot than was hoped for. In particular, there was far less ‘viral’ growth than expected, with usage driven mostly by paid advertising. It was determined that most of the traffic to the Superbot was generated by the Facebook advertising rather than through other channels, including the EDM to CHOICE supporters. It was also determined that better targeting of Facebook ads to the evening hours after 6 pm resulted in more ‘click throughs’. The ‘trickle feed’ approach to placing Facebook ads was also found to be more effective than the ‘big splash’ approach. To meet the target for the total number of Superbot users, CHOICE extended the campaign into 2018.

4.3 Total usage

By 28 February 2018, 2,035 people had accessed the Superbot, fulfilling the undertaking to FLA to attract at least 2,000 users. Over 300,000 people had to be reached through the advertising and other promotions. The ‘hit rate’ in terms of getting people to interact with the Superbot is around 1%. This ‘hit rate’ is generally considered reasonable for online campaigns that seek to direct people to a website. In the case of the Superbot, the Facebook campaign sought to encourage people to launch and interact with a chat bot – the 1% ‘hit rate’ should be regarded positively.

Based on Facebook Ad Manager demographics, 56% of all users were male and 44% were female. Around two thirds were aged 18-24 years and one third 25-30 years. The
targeting was more successful for a younger, male audience. During the latter campaign bursts, women were more heavily targeted to increase numbers.

4.4 User reactions to the Superbot

It was clear from the user survey that the Superbot worked as intended to entertain, amuse and create interest. When asked about their initial reactions to the Superbot, 78% said they were curious, 46% said they were entertained and 37% said that they were amused. As the results below show, there was also a tendency for some to say that they were at first suspicious of the Superbot. Only small numbers of people said that they were bored, annoyed or concerned.

Figure 1. Initial reactions to the Superbot

Q: Which of the following describes how you felt when you first started using the chat bot?

In terms of the ‘other’ reactions that were reported, people also said that they were surprised, delighted, hopeful, relieved (that some help was available), humoured or else said that the Superbot was ‘fun’ or ‘hilarious’. Some others said that they felt frustrated, confused or cynical, though these were obviously in the minority.

Survey respondents were specifically asked if they liked the chatty, informal style of the information and the interactive way it was provided. Overwhelmingly, people’s response was positive. A large 59% of people said that yes, they thought it was ‘really good’ and a further 29% said they thought it was ‘okay’. Only small numbers of people thought it was a ‘a bit dumb’ (7%), ‘really dumb’ (4%) or were not sure (2%). The results are set out in the following figure.
Figure 2. Reactions to the style of communication

Q: Did you like the chatty, informal style of the information provided and the interactive way it was provided?

The response to the survey also showed a very positive view of the Superbot in terms of it being different in style to the traditional provision of information through documents or web content. As set out in the figure below, the vast majority (89%) thought the Superbot was a better way to provide information. This is a pleasing result given the central intention of the Superbot to provide information about a dry subject in a more engaging way.

Figure 3. Comparison to traditional means of providing information about superannuation

Q: Compared to reading a document or information about superannuation on a website, do you think the chat bot was…?

The qualitative interviews with Superbot users also revealed a very positive response. The ease of use, entertaining approach and innovative style were all noted by users:
“I thought it was super-easy to use.”

“It was entertaining and different to anything I’ve used.”

“It was useful and relevant. It was simple and I like the elements of humour. It wasn’t bland and it wasn’t a standard boring bot.”

“I thought it was a great new innovative tool. It made a boring topic into something fun, engaging and practical!”

“I thought it was a fun way of doing it. The images and the gifs were great and made it interesting. It worked. It wasn’t overwhelming.”

“I liked how the information was presented. It was fun, easy to understand, and although a little lame, the jokes and gifs kept me engaged. Messenger makes it so accessible, and it’s a great platform to communicate through.”

“Personally speaking, I found it much more informative compared to a real person.”

As already noted, there was some concern detected through the prototype testing that the Superbot was some type of ‘scam’ or otherwise not trustworthy. After some refinements to help address this issue, it is a positive finding that the information provided via the Superbot was widely regarded as trustworthy. As the figure below shows, a very large majority (83%) of survey respondents said that the information provided was trustworthy and only 6% thought it was not trustworthy.

**Figure 4. Trustworthiness of the information provided via the Superbot**

Q: How trustworthy was the information?
It should be kept in mind, however, that the trust issue may still have been a barrier to usage for some. The results above are based on those people who proceeded to interact with the Superbot and may not be reflective of the wider population’s view.

4.5 Educatve value of the Superbot

According to the survey of users, many people had not given much thought to their superannuation prior to using the Superbot. Specifically, 14% had not given any thought to their super and 43% had not given much thought to it. Only 13% said that they had given a lot of thought to their superannuation. The results are set out in the following figure.

Figure 5. Amount of thought previously given to superannuation

Q: Prior to using the chat bot, how much thought had you given to your superannuation?

The following figures emphatically shows the educative value of the Superbot. One quarter (25%) of all of those who used the Superbot said that they now understand a lot more about superannuation and a further 32% said that they understand a bit more about it. Only 4% said that they still don’t know how superannuation works. Further to this, 23% said that since using the Superbot they plan to take much more interest in their superannuation and 31% said that they will take a little bit more interest.

These results are pleasing in that they demonstrate the potential of the Superbot to improve people’s understanding and level of attention to their superannuation.
The qualitative research also revealed the value of the Superbot in terms of raising awareness and interest. The interviews showed that the Superbot had helped people to understand the financial realities of saving for retirement and the rules around accessing super. The Superbot also helped them to realise that they could easily check if they had multiple accounts and consolidate their accounts if required. Even those who felt they had a good working knowledge of superannuation valued their ‘discussion’ with Cado. The following quotes illustrate these points:
“I definitely found the information useful, particularly I did not know that the ATO had an online tool to find lost super and that it was so quick and easy to check. I didn't realise I could potentially access superannuation if I was injured, so that was news to me too.”

“It's a lot of money when you add it all up. We all should think about it a bit more... plan for the future.”

“I never thought the fees would be so much. Much better that I get that money.”

“Personally, I was aware of most of the information I have discussed with the bot but it was still very interesting to talk to the bot who was very much "understanding", interactive and responsive.”

4.6 Practical value of the Superbot

Survey respondents were asked if, while they were using the Superbot, they visited the MyGov website as suggested. About half (49%) said that they had visited the site and half (49%) said that they did not. The figures correspond with the Facebook chat bot analytics that show around half of all users visited the MyGov website during their Superbot session. A small 2% were not sure on this point. Of those who did visit the MyGov website, half (49%) said that they found that they only had one superannuation account and that no further action could be taken. A large 18% said that they could see that they had multiple superannuation account and were able to successfully consolidate them. This represents a total of 9% of all users who consolidated their superannuation accounts during their interaction with the Superbot. This should be regarded as a key finding of the research.

Some other people said that they visited the MyGov website and could see multiple superannuation accounts but either wanted to do more research before consolidating (9%) or were not able to successfully consolidate (4%). This suggests that the interaction with the Superbot may ultimately lead to a larger proportion of people who make savings through consolidating their superannuation accounts.

The results in terms of the actions that Superbot users took are set out in Table 1 below.
Table 1. Ability to consolidate superannuation accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following applies to your visit to the MyGov website?</th>
<th>% People who visited MyGov (n=293)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t get the information I was looking for via the MyGov website</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I checked my super accounts but only found one account</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could see that I had multiple superannuation accounts but I couldn’t work out how to consolidate them</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could see that I had multiple superannuation accounts but I wanted to do more research before consolidating</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had multiple superannuation accounts and I successfully consolidated them</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something else (Please specify)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the other things that people reported about their experience with visiting the MyGov website, most often this related to people reporting that they had no superannuation accounts listed or that they were simply verifying that their previous efforts to consolidate their super had been effective (ie that they only had one account listed). Several people also noted that the MyGov website was not functional at the time or that they had some technical problem with the website.

The qualitative research also revealed how easily people were able to consolidate their super accounts while using the Superbot:

“I didn’t know I had super in different accounts. I went to the My Gov site and I consolidated my super from three jobs I’d had previously into one. I was surprised to see that I had super elsewhere. I had no idea.”

“I didn’t know I could have accounts combined and that it could happen through the MyGov site.”

“I’ve been meaning to do it but thought it would be too hard. I was surprised how easy it was.”

“It was good to do it there and then. I wouldn’t have done it otherwise.”
4.7 Behaviour change brought about by the Superbot

Among survey respondents, 13% already made additional contributions to their superannuation and 31% said that they would like to but did not have any spare income. Some 31% said that they did not want to make additional superannuation contributions right now. A fairly large 25% of people did not know that it was possible to make additional contributions.

Survey respondents were asked if, since using the bot, they had made any changes to their superannuation contributions. A relatively large 11% said that they were now contributing more. A further 56% of people said that they had not made changes to their contributions but that they were thinking about it. One third said that they would probably not make any changes to their contributions. These results are set out in the following table.

Table 2. Changes to superannuation contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since using the bot, have you made any changes to the contributions you make to superannuation?</th>
<th>% (n=592)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes – I have started contributing a lot more</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – I have started contributing a bit more</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – I have reduced the amount I am contributing</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No – I haven’t made any changes to my contributions yet but I am thinking about it</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No - I probably won’t make any changes to my contributions</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, many people are not in a financial position to make additional contributions to their superannuation, despite their understanding of the advantages. It is noteworthy, however, that interaction with the Superbot is associated with an increase in contributions for just over one in ten people. Again, this should be regarded as a very positive result.

Respondents were also asked what other things they had done since using the Superbot. The results are set out in the table below, showing that large proportions of people discussed the Superbot with their family and friends, looked for further information on the Internet and/or used an online calculator or App to work out how much superannuation they will have at retirement. The research showed that in lieu of making additional contributions, the Superbot at least prompted a further exploration of the advantages of contributing more.
### Table 3. Additional actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since using the bot, are there any other things that you have done?</th>
<th>% (n=592)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussed it with my partner, family or friends</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken to a financial planner or superannuation expert</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked for information on the Internet</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used an online calculator or app to work out how much I will have in retirement</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken to my superannuation fund</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something else (Please specify)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these things</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the ‘other’ actions that people had taken, several people said that they had:

- Sent the Superbot to friends or family members
- Checked over superannuation statements and communications
- Helped a friend or family member to consolidate their super
- Researched or compared available superannuation products.

#### 4.8 Super for new and expectant mothers

Some additional telephone interviews were conducted with young women who had provided their contact details via the online survey. The focus of these interviews was to explore reactions to the Superbot content relating to making superannuation contributions while not working due to childcare commitments.

Among the women interviewed, it was generally understood that women can be at a disadvantage financially when taking a period off work to care for a newborn or young child. None of those interviewed, however, had previously considered how this disadvantage might flow through to retirement because of the gap in their superannuation savings. It was more common for the women to think about their employability, for instance, after the period of time off work.

In this regard, the Superbot was thought to include highly relevant and useful information. A number of the women said that superannuation was an important issue to consider and discuss with their partner and that the Superbot had prompted further thinking and discussion. Two of the women interviewed said that they intended to find a way to continue making contributions when they took unpaid leave. Two others said...
that they intended to make arrangements for their partner’s contributions to be split evenly between them. The remaining women said that while they would like to continue making contributions, they thought it was unlikely that they would be able to.

Following are some quotes to illustrate the reactions to the specific Superbot content:

“*You’re thinking about so many other things. Keeping up your super is the last thing you think about but I suppose it’s important.*”

“*You sort of think that if you don’t have to pay it, you don’t.*”

“*I’d never thought of it that way but it makes sense.*”

“*It seems fair that we split our super while I’m not working.*”

“*I don’t plan to be off work for long so I probably wouldn’t bother.*”

“*You get the government contribution so it’s definitely worth it. If you’re going to try and save money during that time, that’s the way to do it.*”

None of the women interviewed thought that Cado’s questioning was intrusive – it was clear that a degree of trust had developed by that stage of the ‘conversation’. Most of the women were comfortable with the slightly ‘cheeky’ or ‘flirtatious’ tone of the questioning and information provided. One women said that she “could have done without it.”

4.9 Other information that would be useful to include

Interviewees were asked if there was any other information that could be provided via the Superbot, that would be useful to them. It was clear from the discussions that some people were quite hungry for information and wanted to know more about superannuation. In particular, people indicated that they wanted some more specific information about some of the things that Cado had alluded to: when you can access your super; roughly how much can be lost in fees; how much you need in retirement; choices with regard to level of risk/growth; options for making additional contributions; and the tax advantages of making additional contributions. Following are some examples of the comments made:

“I still find superannuation very confusing, particularly all the different fees and whether to invest in low/high risk activities. I would like the bot to help me understand these aspects more
I’d like to know how high fees are.”

“I’d like to know more about contributions and what steps you can do to contribute more.”

“When can I access my super? How much will I need to have to live off when I retire and therefore how much do I need to contribute now? Usually I rely on my hubby for this info.”

These issues might be considered when undertaking further development of the Superbot. The response also suggests that the Superbot piqued the interest of many people who may go on to do some more research. It was suggested that, at the very least, Cado could provide some advice about where to go for authoritative information and advice on these matters.

4.10 Cost benefit

The total cost to implement the project, inclusive of background research, product development, testing, project management, social media and other marketing, legal expenses and evaluation was $244,156. This was funded through the $180,000 grant provided by FLA and an in-kind contribution by CHOICE. The per person cost to generate interactions with the Superbot was $120 ($244,156 divided by 2035 users). The cost of stimulating people to consolidate their superannuation accounts (given that 9% of all users successfully did this) was $1,333 per person.

Work done by the Productivity Commission in April 2018 shows that around one third of all superannuation accounts are ‘unintended multiples’. The report states that “over time, the foregone returns compound and unnecessarily erode members’ retirement balances and can leave a typical full-time worker 6 per-cent (or $51,000) worse off at retirement.” For the people who interacted with the Superbot and successfully consolidated their superannuation accounts, the average saving to them at retirement would be $51,000. Further financial benefits flow for people who were prompted to make additional superannuation contributions. This ultimately translates to a saving for government in terms of reduced expenditure on the Age Pension.

In terms of cost benefit, an intervention costing $1,333 per person resulted in a saving to individuals of $51,000 on average and a corresponding saving to government. The per ‘consolidator’ cost would also be reduced if the Superbot was more widely marketed.

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based on economies of scale\textsuperscript{3}. Clearly, this suggests a good return on investment and supports a case for the further development of highly engaging tools to assist young people (and others) to better manage their superannuation savings.

\textsuperscript{3} The cost of Facebook advertising to generate usage equated to $35 per ‘consolidator’
5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation demonstrates that CHOICE developed and implemented an innovative means of communicating some important messages about superannuation to a young audience. The iterative process of development, supported by user testing helped to arrive at a communications product that met the intended goals.

The feedback from users – through the various prototypes and the final product – was generally very positive. While the communication style was not everyone’s ‘cup of tea’, most people appreciated the effort to make the subject matter interesting and fun. The Superbot seemed to strike the right balance between irreverence and formality. It was clear that the humorous approach of Cado capitalised in a positive way on the controversial characterisation of young people as ‘money wasters’. Many people commented that the approach was refreshing and 89% of people said that it was a better way to provide the information than the usual approaches.

Importantly, the Superbot had a demonstrable educational value. One quarter of all users said that they now understand a lot more about superannuation and a further 32% said they understand it a bit more. A majority of 54% said that they would take more interest in their super in future (with 37% saying that they already took an interest). As indicators of the Superbot’s ability to engage people, these results are very positive.

The Superbot also had significant practical value. Half (49%) of all users said that they visited the MyGov website while using the Superbot. A significant 9% of all Superbot users said that they consolidated multiple superannuation accounts and some others said that they could see multiple accounts but wanted to do some more research before consolidating. Some 11% said that they were now making more voluntary contributions to their super and 56% said that they were thinking about doing so. A large 62% of people reported other actions in terms of discussing the issues with family and friends, speaking to a financial planner or their superannuation fund manager or using available calculators to explore different retirement scenarios. Again, these results are all very positive indicators of the effectiveness of the tool.

Although it seems clear that the Superbot is highly effective, the challenge of promoting it and getting people to use it is significant. The efforts made by CHOICE to promote the tool yielded the target number of users but a time extension and more precise targeting of the advertising was required to achieve this. The paid Facebook advertising was the most effective in driving uptake but needed to reach a very large number of people to attract users.
Throughout the development process, it was clear that there was some distrust of the Facebook Messenger medium due to the prevalence of financial and identity theft scams. Although some measures were put in place to put people's minds at ease, it is likely that this remained a barrier to use. Most people who used the Superbot thought it was trustworthy but the degree to which suspicion acted as a barrier is unknown.

In summary, the Superbot is a highly effective and age-appropriate communications tool that has the potential to educate and to provide a significant financial benefit to users in retirement. The evaluation supports a case for further development of the tool and for wider promotion. The case can also be made for the tool to be made available on other platforms (eg websites) so that it is more accessible and presented to people through mediums that are considered more trustworthy. Emerging voice and language recognition technology may also allow for a more natural ‘conversation’ with the chatbot, using free text and/or verbal input from users. As these technologies improve, the ability to use these approaches as financial literacy education tools will be enhanced.
Appendix A: User testing discussion guide

CHOICE ‘Superbot’
Prototype testing – discussion guide

Introduction
Thank you very much for agreeing to help us with the development of the CHOICE Superbot. (respondents were recruited by J&S Research)

I would like to speak with you for 20 minutes or so to hear your feedback. Is now a good time?

Firstly, can I please check that you have had the opportunity to have a look at the link that we sent you? [RESCHEDULE IF NECESSARY]

I would like to point out that this is a confidential interview. We are looking for your honest opinions. We did not develop the Superbot, we are just employed to gather feedback. So, your honest opinions are what we are after.

1. Overall, what did you think of the Superbot?
2. I know that superannuation may not be the most interesting subject, but did you find the information provided useful or interesting? What specifically did you find useful or interesting?
3. What did you think of the way the information was presented? Did you enjoy interacting with the bot? Is this a good way to communicate with someone like you?
4. Did the bot teach you anything about superannuation? If so, what?
5. Before using the bot, did you know whether or not you had more than one superannuation fund?
6. Did you visit the ATO website as suggested, to see if you had superannuation that you could consolidate into one fund? [WE NEED A COUNT]
7. Were you able to consolidate your super? [NEED A COUNT]. Is this something you might do in future?
8. Did you share/post the link via Facebook? Is this something you would think of doing?
9. Is there any other information about superannuation that the bot could provide?
10. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Thanks very much for your time.
Appendix B: Survey questionnaire

DOING BETTER SUPER THROUGH TECHNOLOGY CHAT BOT USER SURVEY (FINAL)

Introduction
Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this short survey. It will take only about 5 minutes of your time. At the end of the survey, you can enter the draw to win one of three $100 Australia post Visa pre paid gift cards.

Q1. Firstly, just making sure that you remember using the superannuation chat bot via Facebook Messenger?
Select one
1. Yes
2. No – TERMINATE WITH THANKS

Great!
Q2. Prior to using the chat bot, how much thought had you given to your superannuation?
Select one
1. A lot
2. A fair bit
3. Not much
4. None at all
5. Not sure

Q3. Which of the following describes how you felt when you first started using the bot?
Select all that apply
1. Curious
2. Entertained
3. Suspicious
4. Bored
5. Annoyed
6. Amused
7. Concerned
8. Something else (specify ___________________)
9. Not sure

Q4. Did you like the chatty, informal style of the information provided and the interactive way it was provided?
Select one
1. Yes – I thought it was really good
2. Yes, I thought it was okay
3. No, I thought it was a bit dumb
4. No, I thought it was really dumb
5. Not sure
Q5. Compared to reading a document or information about superannuation on a website, do you think the chat bot was…?
Select one
1. A much better way to provide information
2. A slightly better way to provide information
3. The same
4. A slightly worse way to provide information
5. A much worse way to provide information
6. Not sure

Q6. How trustworthy was the information?
Select one
1. Very trustworthy
2. Fairly trustworthy
3. Not that trustworthy
4. Not at all trustworthy
5. Not sure

Q7. Which of the following is most true for you, since using the chat bot?
Select one
1. I already understood how superannuation works
2. I now understand a lot more about how superannuation works
3. I now understand a bit more about how superannuation works
4. I still don’t understand how superannuation works
5. Not sure

Q8. Which of the following is most true for you?
Select one
1. I have always taken an interest in my superannuation
2. Since using the bot, I will take much more interest in my superannuation
3. Since using the bot, I will take a little bit more interest in my superannuation
4. I’m still not that interested in my superannuation

Q9. When you were using the chat bot did you check your superannuation accounts on the MyGov website?
Select one
1. Yes
2. No – SKIP TO Q11
3. Not sure – SKIP TO Q11
Q10. If yes, which of the following applies to your visit to the MyGov website?  
Select one  
1. I couldn’t get the information I was looking for via the MyGov website  
2. I checked my super accounts but only found one account  
3. I could see that I had multiple superannuation accounts but I couldn’t work out how to consolidate them  
4. I could see that I had multiple superannuation accounts but I wanted to do more research before consolidating  
5. I had multiple superannuation accounts and I successfully consolidated them  
6. Something else (please specify __________________________)  
7. Not sure

Q11. Which of the following best applies to you?  
1. I already make additional contributions to my superannuation, beyond what my employer pays  
2. I would like to make additional contributions to my super but I don’t have any spare income  
3. I didn’t know that you could make additional contributions  
4. I don’t want to make additional contributions to my super right now

Q12. Since using the bot, have you made any changes to the contributions you make to superannuation?  
Select one  
1. Yes – I have started contributing a lot more  
2. Yes – I have started contributing a bit more  
3. Yes – I have reduced the amount I am contributing  
4. No – I haven’t made any changes to my contributions yet but I am thinking about it  
5. No - I probably won’t make any changes to my contributions

Q13. Since using the bot, are there any other things that you have done?  
Select all that apply  
1. Discussed it with my partner, family or friends  
2. Spoken to a financial planner or superannuation expert  
3. Looked for information on the Internet  
4. Used an online calculator or app to work out how much I will have in retirement  
5. Spoken to my superannuation fund  
6. Something else (specify __________________________)  
7. None of these things

Many thanks for your time.