

SNAPCHAT REDESIGN: GROUP #3

To: Professor Joel Kline, Annville, Pennsylvania

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Subject: Proposed changes made to the application "Snapchat"

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Purpose:

The messaging application "Snapchat" has become a popular app for not only teenagers and young adults but anyone with a smartphone as a means of communication. While the design of the app is not impossible to navigate, there are still some revisions that can be made to make the app easier and more enjoyable to use while improving the app's discoverability, learnability, and usability as well. The purpose of this report is to discuss the proposed upgrades to the application "Snapchat" and how the user will benefit from these changes.

Summary

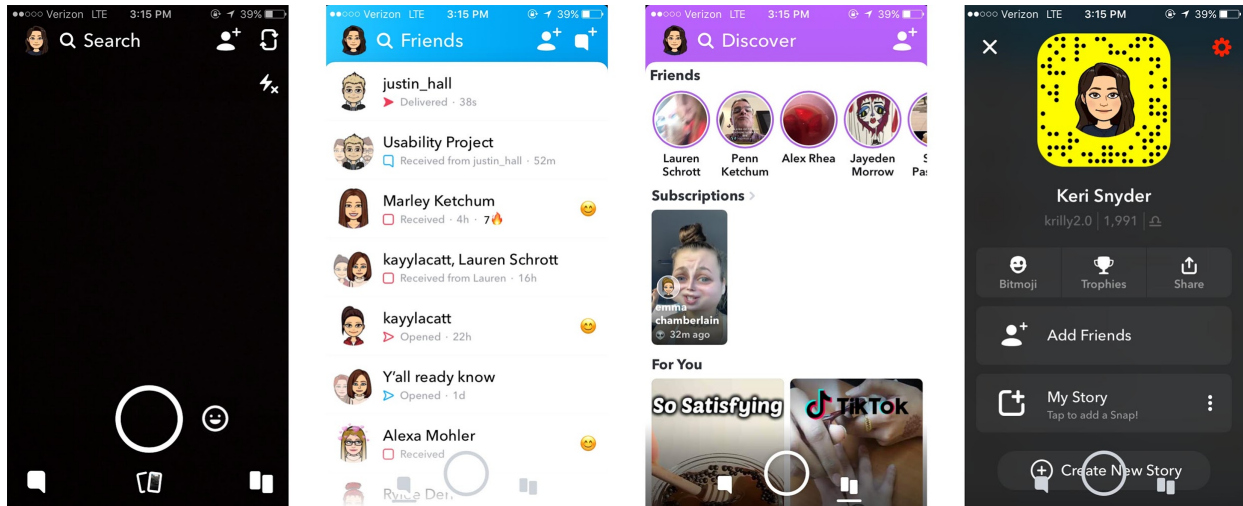
Snapchat is popular among its users, but there are several design issues that impair its usability. The revisions we have made to the current application accommodate Norman's seven design principles among other principles of design. We took a closer look at each of the four main pages users find themselves on while using the app and improved them by applying these principles. Each page's upgrades significantly improve the app's discoverability, because all of the available and relevant functions are made visible on the page. Consistency throughout the app affords quicker learnability among users because features and icons remain in the same place on each of the pages. Added signifiers help users know where they are in the app and form a better idea of what will happen when they click on certain icons. Good mappings were also considered and applied where necessary. User experience was our priority, and we believe our revisions will enhance the application's usability and make features easier to locate in a shorter amount of time.

History of the Problem

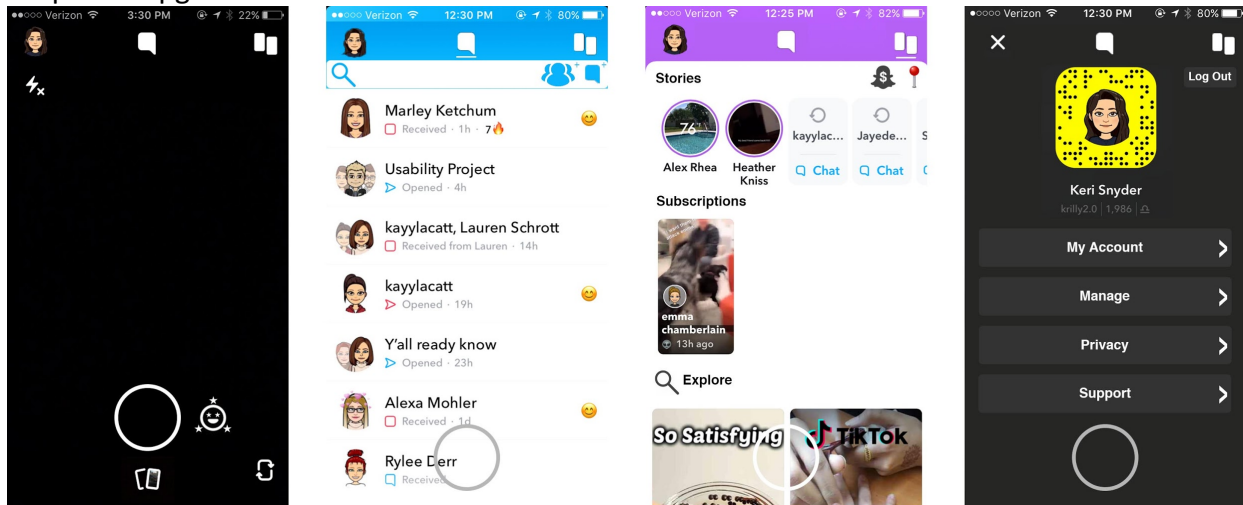
Since its release in 2011, Snapchat has evolved into a dominant social networking app that millions of people use daily. Throughout its lifespan, Snapchat has gone through many different designs and features. Some updates were embraced, but many were disliked upon their introduction. Users tend to dislike new designs that force them to relearn how to use the app. Even though the app has transformed quite a bit over the past eight years, it still seems that Snapchat has not nailed down the most usable design quite fully yet. Some users still have trouble navigating the app and interacting with the different pages Snapchat has available. The goal of this redesign is to optimize the user experience.

Proposed Software Upgrade

Current Situation:



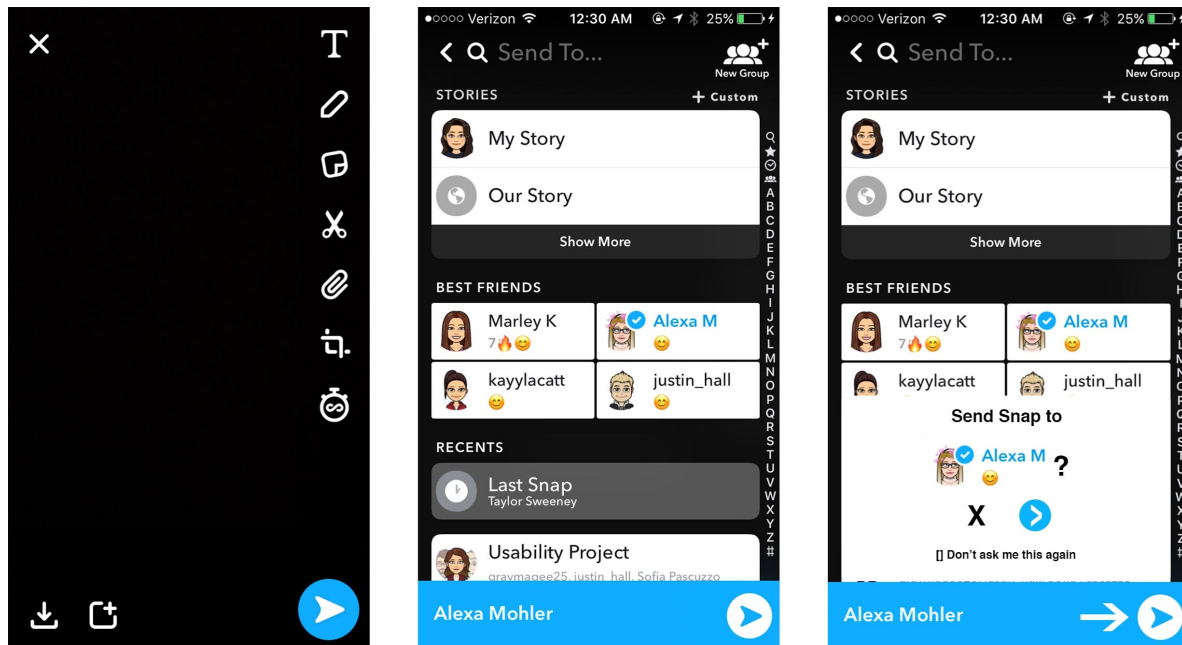
Proposed Upgrade:



The pages shown above have been named the following (left to right): Snap, Chat, Explore, and Settings. The revisions made to each page were carefully thought out with Norman's design principles in mind. By accommodating the principles of Discoverability, Feedback, Conceptual Model, Affordances, Signifiers, Good Mappings, and Constraints, we were able to design what we feel is a much more usable app. Further explanations for each page's revisions are listed below.

Snap Page: While the user is on each page, there are always three icons visible to take them to the different pages on the app. The icons are placed at the top of each page and are always located in the same place on each page. The placement of the icons helps with discoverability because the four pages available to the user are visible right away. Consistency and proximity apply here as well because the icons are always located in the same place on each page and all the icons next to each other function the same. The current app includes an "Add Friends" feature on each page, which is not necessary. Having the same features on every

page constrains learnability because it can become easy to confuse the pages and forget where you are on the app. Accommodating conceptual model, the Snapchat camera now mimics that of the iPhone camera. The camera functions (front/rear-facing, flash control) have been moved to where users are most used to seeing them. This consistency helps with learnability as well as usability because users are already familiar with the camera feature. The revision made to the filters icon accommodates good mappings and signifiers. The face has stars on and around it, indicating what will happen when the user clicks on it. The relationship between controls and effects has been made more obvious as a result of this change. The final revision made to this page appears once the user is ready to send a Snap. When sending a Snap, the user will be prompted with a question to confirm the recipient, which constrains user error. The user will have the option to check a box that reads, “Don’t ask me this again” if they wish not to see it.



Chat Page: As stated before, the three navigational icons have been moved to the top of the page to improve discoverability and accommodate the proximity principle as well. Below these icons, the search bar remains on the page so that users can search for friends to start new conversations with. This helps with discoverability but also demonstrates good mapping because the user knows what a search bar is used for. Having it clearly visible improves usability on the page. The line shown under the “Chat” page icon acts as a signifier, letting the user know which page of the app they are currently on. Also staying consistent on this page is the removal of the “Add Friends” feature, which will be visible only on the settings page. This not only improves the usability of the entire app but applies the design principle 80/20 rule because it is just hidden when not needed rather than removed completely. The final revision made to this page is the “Create Group” feature. The icon is next to the “New Chat” icon. The current app only makes this feature visible to the user once they click to create a new chat. Discoverability, as well as visibility of the feature, are enhanced by moving it to the main screen.

Explore Page: The different features on this page improve the app's discoverability by showing the user everything that is available to them of relevance. The goal of this page is to see what your friends are up to via their Snapchat Stories or where they are on the Snap Map. Another reason users come to this page is to view celebrities' stories or read different pages that are of interest to the user. The current app has the Snap Store hidden in settings, so not many users know it exists. Giving both the Snap Store and the Snap Map their own icon makes these features much easier to find. Accommodating good mappings, everything on the page has been made more uniform with each section having a relevant title. The addition of an "Explore" search bar in place of the current app's "For You" section affords better user experience. This section has become more relevant to the user because "Explore" indicates they can search for things of interest to them and subscribe to or view that content. The content that pops up is not necessarily of interest to the user until they choose to explore content relevant to their own interests, so the "For You" title on the current app is not the best in relation to the content being shown.

Settings Page: The most significant change made to the "Settings" page was the organization of all the different options available to the user. In the current app, it can be difficult to find the setting you are looking for with the large number of options visible at a time. The 36 visible options have been sorted into four categories: My Account, Manage, Privacy, and Support. Options relevant to each of these categories will be much easier to find, affording increased speed of use as well as improved discoverability. The first row of features on the current app (Bitmoji/Trophies/Share) will be under My Account. The upgraded "Settings" page makes visible only relevant information. This revision accommodates Hick's Law by including a list of related subcategories in each of the four main categories (Example: Account → Username). Another revision is the "x" that appears in the top left corner of the screen while the user is on the "Settings" page in place of the Bitmoji that appears on the previous three pages. Since the Bitmoji icon represents the "Settings" page, the "x" in place of the icon indicates to the user that they are on that page, and clicking the "x" will take the user to the last page they were on. Once the user selects a category from the four visible choices, the "x" turns into a back arrow that enables the users to return to the previous screen. These revisions allow users to make multiple changes without having to pull up the settings screen every time and affords a better and quicker user experience while searching for the correct option in settings, improving both learnability and usability.

Benefits of the Software Upgrade

Not only will Snapchat users benefit from the software upgrade but the application itself will profit as well. Users will have an easier time using the app when it comes to finding specific features available to them including different options that are hidden in the current app's settings. The revisions are beneficial in speeding up the time it takes to communicate with other users in the app as well as time searching for features within the app. Related icons are placed in close proximity to one another in our redesign, and certain features have been moved to the page that is most relevant to that action. For example, the Snap Map has been moved to the "Explore" page, because that is where you typically go to see what your friends are up to.

The current app does not include a separate icon for this feature, so inexperienced users may have a hard time locating it. The application itself will benefit from the software upgrade because the Snap Store now has its own icon visible on the “Explore” page. We did not know the Snap Store existed until we took a closer look at the “Settings” page. Snapchat would profit from making the store easier to locate because the items available for purchase are popular among most users. The application has upset users in the past with various updates, so this upgrade would be beneficial as it is expected to improve the overall user experience.

Conclusion

We believe our proposed revisions to the popular messaging application “Snapchat” will improve its usability overall, thus improving the overall user experience. By accommodating Norman’s seven design principles among other principles of design, we created an upgraded version of the app that affords better learnability and more ease of use. Functions have been made more explicit in terms of what they do as well as their visibility on the application. User experience was our priority, and we believe our revisions will enhance the application’s usability and make features easier to locate.