Usability Test Plan

The Application "Snapchat"
Lebanon Valley College

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Date: April 5, 2019

Introduction

This document acts as an outline plan for the usability evaluation of the application Snapchat. The purpose of this usability evaluation is to test the application for any errors and see if the errors correlate with users' levels of experience with the application. This will be determined by comparing users' Snapchat scores, which show whether the user is a beginner or a more advanced user, with the number of errors that occur.

What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a mobile-based application used by smartphone users to communicate with friends through the use of pictures and chats. Snapchat is a way to interact with groups of people and allows users to show others what they are up to at any given time. The Snapchat creators state that "Life's more fun when you live in the moment!"

Redesign Usability Goals

The proposed redesign to the current Snapchat application was designed with the following general usability goals in mind:

- Discoverability of the application by making frequently used or important features more visible
- Learnability for new or inexperienced users by keeping pages consistent throughout the application
- Ease of use of the application by making features easier to locate and making only those that are relevant visible on each page

The results of the usability evaluation will be compared with the proposed redesign to determine whether or not the revisions would prevent errors from occurring and afford more ease of use within the application.

Usability Concerns and Goals

The current Snapchat application has several identified issues that the usability evaluation should emphasize. The following issues should be made more explicit as a result of the evaluation:

- Mapping of certain items is unclear and confusing
- Learnability is slow
- Discoverability of features are slim to none
- Certain signifiers are lacking

Specific goals have been defined to evaluate each area of concern. These goals will guide the development of the task scenarios and any questionnaires that may be used in the evaluation of the application.

Test Goals

We are measuring for errors and ease of use within the Snapchat application and how they correlate with users' Snapchat scores by using a think-aloud protocol and counting the number of taps the user makes on the Snapchat screen. The results will determine whether or not the proposed changes will be successful in preventing errors and increasing ease of use. The think-

aloud protocol will aid in evaluating the ease of use of the app by making clear which features are difficult to locate and emphasize in what area within the application users struggle the most.

Heuristics

Listed below are the heuristics in which the usability evaluation will focus on:

- Visibility -- Does the current application keep the user informed on what is going on within the app?
- User control and freedom -- Does the current application offer a clearly marked "way out" should the user make a mistake?
- Consistency and standards -- Is the current application consistent within its pages and functionality?
- Error prevention -- Is the current application designed carefully to prevent problems from occurring in the first place?
- Recognition rather than recall -- Does the current application help minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible when necessary?

Task Scenarios

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1. You see a poster for an event that you think your friend would be interested in attending and need to show them as soon as possible.
    a. Open Snapchat. Without clicking on anything, what is the first thing you would do? Where would you go from here in the application?

2. You want to have a way to communicate with three of your group members for a project for class. See if you can form a group chat with three people, and give the group a name so it is easy to find.
    a. Create a group with three other people. Name the group.

3. You want to send a funny picture of yourself to one of your friends. See if you can find a way to distort or enhance your appearance and take a Snapchat.
    a. Send a Snapchat with an applied filter to one person in the group you just made.

4. You do not like the way you look right now so you would prefer not to send a picture. See if there is another way to communicate with one of your Snapchat friends and tell them your favorite color.
    a. On the conversations page, send a chat to a different person in the group you sent a Snapchat to in the previous task.

5. You want to buy someone something personalized for the holidays. See if there are any items available for purchase using Snapchat.
    a. Locate the Snapchat store and find something you might buy the last person in the group you created.

Target Audience

The application Snapchat has a variety of users. Users range from tweens, middle school students, high school students, college students, young adults, cool parents, and celebrities, to anyone with a smartphone. The targeted group of users in the usability evaluation is college students as it is believed they are one of the most frequent groups of users. In addition, college students are easily accessible to the testers for recruitment. Results may vary based on the users' level of experience using the application.

Background

The users' experiences using the application will vary among participants based on their Snapchat scores. Users with a lower Snapchat score will be expected to make more errors and tap more frequently than more advanced users with higher Snapchat scores. The think-aloud protocol will also help determine this. Users with less experience will be expected to question their actions more and have more uncertainty about the outcomes.

User Profile and Persona

Participants are young adults in college. Christina is a female college student who is 20 years old. She plays soccer at Penn State University, main campus. She is a business major who hangs out with her two best friends. She is a solid B or C student with a 2.9 GPA. She is not the most motivated student. Outside of classes and soccer, Christina enjoys being social on the weekends. She uses Snapchat to post about game days and talk with her teammates in group chats. She also uses Snapchat as a distraction from her schoolwork and loves posting every detail of her life on her stories, especially pictures of her Starbucks and Dunkin' cups. She always posts videos of her weekend activities for everyone to see.

Design of the Usability Evaluation

A usability evaluation for the application Snapchat in which seven participants are tested in individual sessions will be completed for this project. Each testing session will consist of a 15-minute evaluation by the participant followed by the completion of a post-evaluation questionnaire by the participant. The evaluation will be guided by "real life" tasks that correspond to those commonly completed in the application environment.

The Evaluation Process

The usability evaluation process is as follows:

1. Participant Arrival at Testing Location

Each participant will arrive at the Intermezzo area in the Lynch building at the time they have scheduled for their session. Participants will be greeted by a usability tester and taken to the Usability Test Lab downstairs. A brief introduction to the project will be provided, and the participants will be asked to sign a consent form to participate in the usability test. Additionally, participants will be asked to sign a release form regarding the use of their videotaped and screen-captured usability evaluation.

2. Orientation

Once participants have completed all of the necessary forms, a usability team member will provide them with a brief description of the project and the purposes of the usability test. The participant will be reminded that the usability test is centered on the usability of the Snapchat application and not the participant's particular ability to use technology. At this point, the participant will be given instructions to "think aloud" during the evaluation as well as given a reminder that they will be videotaped and monitored by a screen-capture software during their evaluation session.

3. Performance Evaluation

The performance evaluation portion of the usability test involves having individual participants complete a series of assigned tasks at a designated computer station. The participant's activity during this phase will be recorded on video, monitored by screen-capture software, and supervised and annotated by at least two (2) usability testers.

4. Participant Debriefing

Following the performance evaluation, either when the participant has completed their tasks or run out of time, a debriefing statement will be read to the participant by one (1) of the usability testers.

Logistics

The usability test for the application Snapchat will be completed in the Usability Test Lab located in the basement of the Lynch Building at Lebanon Valley College. This lab is equipped with the necessary technology, including a video projector, camera, and screen-capture software. The Usability Test Lab is large enough to accommodate participants and usability testers.

Requirements for the Evaluation

- Access to the Usability Test Lab and computer station
- A smartphone with the application Snapchat downloaded
- A video projector and camera to capture screen taps
- Screen-capture software

Materials Design

The following materials will be designed and developed for use in the application's usability evaluation:

- Three "test" Snapchat accounts for the user to interact with during the evaluation

Data Collection Methodology

Data will be collected through the use of a think-aloud protocol.
Measures to be collected include the following:

- Confidence in completing tasks in relation to experience using the application
- Ease of use in terms of how easily users find specific items during tasks
- Number of taps during a task in relation to experience using the application

Resources

The following is an estimate for the total resources used within the evaluation:
- Time: approx. 4 hours
- Equipment: video projector, camera, and screen-capture software in Usability Test Lab

Schedule

The usability evaluation will be conducted in mid to late April, 2019. The first week will be dedicated to testing. The next week will be dedicated to evaluation.

15 mins Set up
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15 mins Participant 1
15 mins debrief
15 mins Participant 2
15 mins debrief
15 mins Participant 3
15 mins debrief
15 mins Participant 4
15 mins debrief
15 mins Participant 5
15 mins debrief
15 mins Participant 6
15 mins debrief
15 mins Participant 7
15 mins debrief
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15 mins Clean up
*actual times vary

Assumptions

In the course of the evaluation, the following will be assumed:
- Users with a lower Snapchat score are less experienced, so they will experience more issues than more experienced users
- Participants have at least a general understanding of how to use the application Snapchat