

Group 7

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Simple Evaluation

We received a lot of interesting and helpful feedback from our two application evaluation sessions. We can't touch on every bit of feedback, but we will highlight some of the main points and recurring feedback points we received. Overall, our users expressed positive interest in our application, said that it would be a fun app to use, and expressed that they would use it if it were an actual app. This in itself was very encouraging and tells us that we are on the right track! We also received quite a bit of constructive criticism, but it mostly had to do with buttons, layout and general issues of clarity. Our methods were similar to those we outlined in the evaluation plan, although we did not follow such a structured usability testing format. We asked the users to explore the application and accomplish a few tasks: sign in or sign up, create an event, and view the chat room interface. We asked the users to follow a think-aloud protocol, and we took plenty of notes. We did not monitor any quantitative data. Our tests were relaxed and straightforward, and we were pleased with the amount of helpful feedback we obtained through these informal sessions.

Analysis of Feedback

We noticed a lot of similar comments from the participants with regards to the "make an event" task that we had the users accomplish. One thing we noticed with this task was that the user was confused about whether or not our system allowed you to connect to TV, or if it was only for online media services. They also explained that choosing a date and time for an event works for connecting to a show on Netflix, but it should auto-fill when selecting a show on online television. There was also confusion about what "select media" meant. Both of our users felt that it would be nice if there were different media categories such as media streaming and media sharing. One user noted that he would like to be able to drag and drop media items to a friend. Another point of confusion that we noticed was that one user thought "Games" meant video games, not sports, and expressed disinterest in a feature for playing video games.

Another aspect of our application that caused some confusion was the chat room interface. Both users felt that the "movie info" aspect was not helpful, which we were surprised to discover. One user said he didn't find it helpful because he already chose to watch the movie, so he questioned why he would need more information. The other user said it was irrelevant and took up room. We feel that the movie information section might have been misinterpreted, because we intended it to be a tool to allow the user to look up plot or character information. It is possible that changing the wording of the button, or moving it to another section might make our intention, and the button's purpose, more clearly. In addition to this, one user suggested that there be a screen previous to the chat room that shows the people who have accepted the event invite, and those who are still pending. This could offer the option of continuing to browse while waiting for the others to accept the invite and enter the chat room. We thought this was a great idea, and plan to look into implementing this feature.

Changes

The feedback we received from our participants showed us several ways in which we can improve the usability of our system. The first and simplest change would be to review some of the terminology used in our design. Our participants encountered several cases where their expectations for a feature did not line up with our intentions, based solely on the way we chose to phrase those parts. These problems can easily be resolved with some minor adjustments, such as changing the “Games” category to “Sports” to make it clear what type of program you will see. We also might want to rephrase “Movie Info” to something that better describes what we are using the section for, such as “Behind the Scenes” or “Trivia.” This way it is clear that the section is not a simple synopsis or credits list, but a place to find extra information pertaining to the show and possibly the specific scenes being viewed. In this same vein, labeling some of the currently image-only icons we use may add a level of clarity to them. People seemed confused by the + icon on the main page and the X’s and arrows on the viewing pane, which should be alleviated by adding either a label or tooltip to those icons.

Comments made by our participants also opened our eyes to the fact that in our current design, we have no ‘meeting space’ for a group before starting their show. In a real party, groups won’t begin festivities until an acceptable number of people have arrived, and it shouldn’t be any different when forming a party online. Designing and implementing a lobby for groups would allow them to form and discussion to begin without kicking things off prematurely. The event’s host may choose to begin before everyone invited arrives, accounting for the possibility of no-shows or individual delays. The shows themselves will allow users to drop in or out at any time, but having a lobby allows for most of the party to begin together.

In summary, we were pleased with the feedback we received because it indicated that users liked our app and had a great interest in using it if it were actually created. The criticism was extremely helpful. As mentioned before, most of the negative feedback involved wording and general confusion surrounding the purpose or function of some buttons. However, these are all somewhat easy adjustments. Our system as a whole was pretty well-liked, and if we implement the changes outlined above, we are confident we can improve our system and make it more intuitive, fluid, and easy to use.