**Users and Solutions**

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The following is a short analysis of the mobile application: Microsoft Outlook (Microsoft Corporation, 2023). Microsoft Outlook is a mobile application developed to enable its users to securely send and receive electronic mail. Not only are users able to access email from their Microsoft accounts, but they are able to add a variety of email accounts such as iCloud, yahoo, etc. The application’s overarching goal is to provide this accessibility for sending and receiving emails and be able to do so from a mobile device. The design element that specifically leads to this conclusion is that once a user has logged into at least one of their accounts, the user is always taken to the application's main screen, which is the inbox folder for the selected account(s). On this screen, a list is populated of any emails that have been received. For each email, the sender is displayed along with the subject of the email and a brief preview of the email can be seen. This alone is intuitive enough for any person who has used email services before to know the application is intended for sending and receiving emails.

Microsoft’s Outlook application serves the primary need of being able to send and receive emails when users are on the go or away from their desktop or personal computer. The users the app intends to serve are any users who make use of email accounts and who need to be able to access their email accounts on the go. Users can range from people who use the application for personal or private use, users needing access to business accounts, and even users who have school accounts. The amount and types of users are very diverse and not limited to any specific type of user.

Users want to be able to accomplish the sending and receiving of emails, which includes creating and sending new mail, replying to specific users or groups of users, forwarding emails to other users, and managing important emails users want to keep for later use. This is accomplished by making use of a folder system for each user account that stores emails similarly to a computer's file system. It can be organized specifically by creating folders and naming them. Users are then able to sort emails from their inbox to another folder the user creates.

An additional function the application provides for users is the ability to manage a calendar of events for each of the user's accounts. These calendars can be modified by adding, removing, and editing existing events. Reminders can be created for each event which would then notify the user of upcoming events, such as an upcoming Microsoft Teams meeting or perhaps something more personal like someone’s upcoming birthday. Along with having the ability to access their calendars, users can also access files that they have received/stored from emails, and manage contacts by adding, removing, or modifying them. The application also includes a personalized feed for the user. These functions or goals are supported within the application by having specific screens that the user can navigate to for each of these features. The application can be thought of as persuading users to take action based on how information is presented to users. Emails that have not been read are indicated by the sender and subject line being displayed in bold font. Once the email has been read, the bold font is replaced with a normal font. This helps the user identify new mail and mail that a user may want to take some sort of action on. Similarly, when the user is notified or reminded about upcoming events, a dialogue box appears that displays the relevant information with associated actions the user can take, such as dismissing the notification, snoozing it, etc. While none of these force a user to take action, they certainly attempt the user to take some sort of action that the system thinks the user would want to take. The application’s business objective is to provide a secure means for users to access their email from a mobile device, enabling them to be more organized, productive, and connected (Microsoft Corporation, 2023).

Now that the application's features have been identified, we can begin to look at the design elements that were created to support them. Microsoft has done especially well with following industry standards and best practices by designing an interface that is intuitive, easy to use, and navigate. Buttons are clear and easily understandable. There are four main screens that support the application’s features, all of which have their own identifiable button at the bottom of the screen. An envelope symbol indicates the mail screen, a small calendar with the number for the current day of the month is indicative of the calendar screen, a small paper symbol that looks like it continues on is for the application’s feed screen, and a box with four smaller boxes inside it is for the apps screen. Each screen’s layout allows for users to effectively navigate content. Screens can be scrolled up and down which allows the user to navigate to specific content, such as a specific email on the mail screen, a specific event on the calendar screen, etc. The application also includes additional swipeable actions that enable users to effectively manage their emails. For example, a user can swipe either left or right, depending on the user’s configuration, to delete an email or to move the email to a different folder. Altogether, the application was designed to allow users to easily navigate between screens and to make the user’s content easily accessible and manageable.

If I were responsible for designing the app, the information I would want to know about the users’ goals, needs, and experiences would be as follows: First, I would want to know how information should be presented to users and how much of that information is needed to be displayed at any specific point in time for the user to know what actions can be taken. For example, it is not necessary at first to display the entire contents of an email until a user is ready to view the entire email. I would also want to know if there are other types of data that should be supported for users to be able to incorporate into an email. For example, I would not want users to be able to attach or upload extremely large files, but I would need to know what is a sufficient file size that meets most users' needs. I would want to know what ways users would like to have information displayed, especially when considering features like the calendar and feed. I would want to know what types of information are important for the user to see on their feed and how much of it should be displayed. Should files, such as images include automatic previews or not? How might users want to organize emails? Should it make use of some method for sorting and searching? When thinking about the interface, I would want to know how important colors are to the users if at all. I would want to know how large or small items should be displayed by default. I would want to ensure I have incorporated all the necessary features that are relevant to users and the application's purpose without exceeding the scope of the project’s goals. I would also want to know what symbols are types of actions are most intuitive for users that will enable them to easily navigate between screens and their associated functions. When considering the user’s needs I would also want to know things like how long emails should be kept and how many. What should be the process for deleting emails and ensuring emails are not deleted by mistake? How long should draft emails be saved for? Should it be indefinitely or until the user sends the email or deletes it? Should the application automatically save files that the user receives in emails or not? I would also want to consider things such as security. Should a user be able to stay logged into their account even after closing the application? At what point should a user be asked to re-verify their credentials? All of these questions would be significant to me, especially during the requirements gathering phase of the software development life cycle, as it pertains to the users’ goals, needs, and experiences.

**References**

Microsoft Corporation (2023). *Microsoft Outlook* [Mobile App]. Apple App Store.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-outlook/id951937596>