LINEUP

Paper Prototype: Reflection

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Hermes navigated the first task of finding a specific queue and adding themselves to it on the mobile platform as expected. However, although we had all of the required slips of paper, organizing them from their baggies in the few minutes before class was rushed, so the first actual demonstration went slightly slower than we would have liked. Sorting the slips into smaller, more descriptive baggies so that we could find them faster would have been a helpful exercise.

Unexpectedly, after the first use case, the user decided to explore the Qtracks, which we had prepared, and continued to utilize the graph information provided therein to make a strong observation about the status of the queue. Throughout the testing, the Hermes team member seemed continually interested in the QTracks information. Because of this, we may want to make more information about the queues visible to users to help them make better decisions about when they should enter queues.

The second task was on the desktop platform and had an administrator creating a queue. For this task nearly everything went as expected. The user flowed through the predicted steps quite easily -- selecting "Create a Queue," entering queue title information, and navigating through the Create a Queue pages -- until he got to the additional queue settings. There was some confusion about functionality of these settings, but luckily we had help boxes next to each field, which the user moused over without our help. The help boxes provided the necessary details and the user created the queue successfully. There was one issue that Hermes had with the queue creation -- navigating through the creation steps was too linear. In our final design, we should allow users to create their queue after adding any amount of information. To do this, we would need to have default values for each piece of necessary information and provide the user with a "Finish" or "Create Queue" button on each page along the way. This will create an easier user interface due to the large number of settings we provide administrators with.

There was some ambiguity in the "Queues in Use" page -- the user was confused about whether the other queues listed were queues that the user was standing in or queues that he was managing. Therefore, we need to redesign the page to be less ambiguous. For instance, we will definitely make the links to the "Queue Management" and "Queues You're In" pages more descriptive. However, this confusion led to a possible innovation: unifying the customer and admin interfaces. This format would have a single user that would be able to sign up for queues as well as create and manage queues.

The final use case was again on our mobile version, where we focused on postponing your position in a queue. The user navigated to the queue and postponed themselves successfully with no intervention. This transitioned to a discussion about the best way to allow users to postpone themselves. We decided that the best possible case would allow the user to move back a single position each time they hit the postpone button. Team Hermes members described that they would repeatedly hit the button until they were at a preferable wait time. There was also a very great piece of feedback: to add dequeue boxes (little red 'x's) next to each queue the user is in.

We feel that our exercise with Hermes was very effective at producing manageable and important improvements. The prototype was developed enough to lead to a strong understanding of our intent and system format, but simple enough that it would be reproducible and allow for easy changing. This led to a lot of high-level, constructive feedback (e.g. unifying the types of users), coupled with a few powerful tweaks (e.g. x boxes in "My Queues" and better navigation in "Create Queue").