

Research Plan

Study 1: Semi-structured interview

Background

There are so many different communication tools used for social distancing and video conferencing. Nowadays, many people use video conferencing technology daily either for personal purposes with friends and family or to communicate with employees or team members. Video conferencing is so beneficial and valuable in business. It brought another dimension into business since it provides flexibility to have face-to-face meetings without the expense of travels; it also allows us to share documents and images during meetings.

There are so many well-known solutions that allow people to communicate and socialize anywhere in the world from different locations and make life more comfortable.

One of my favorites is Skype. It is a telecommunications application specializing in providing video chat and voice calls between computers, tablets, and mobile devices owned by the Microsoft.

Research Plan

My research plan is to redesign Skype to be more user-friendly and help the app grow much more significantly than before.

What's the Problem?

To be honest, I always was using the desktop version of skype during my online meetings, and it was so enjoyable and practical. A few months back, I downloaded the Skype IOS version suitable for the iPhone for ease. However, after two days of using it, I deleted the app and switched to the desktop version. In my defense, as a user, the appearance of the app is not motivating enough to stick using it. And in terms of UI/UX, it seems to build up poorly.

This UX case study is my attempt to improve the existing experience of mobile application of Skype.

User Research

Research Questions:

[Needs] What is essential to use a communication app?

- How do we get users motivated to daily use?

[Behaviours] How people react to communication apps for work purposes?

- How useful are communication apps for students to communicate with supervisors?

Do they really need other information to stick on one platform?

- How do users feel about existing products?

Method

- 30- minute remote semi-structured interview to gather in-depth qualitative data
- The researcher will use the interview script as a guide and ask follow-up questions based on answers from the users.

Recruiting

5 participants

- Master and phd students of a canadian university who:
 - Use the communication app every day to have an online meeting mostly with their supervisors.
 - Have been using the products for at least 3 months.
- To recruit participants, we will send emails to full-time employees including my family and friends who are working from home during pandemic.

Timeline

Design proposal:

- Dec 7 2020—
- Recruiting: Dec 7 2020—
- Sessions: Dec 7 2020—
- Readout: Dec 7 2020—

Introduction

My name is Parvaneh Pouladzadeh. Thank you very much for participating in this study. I am currently working on a project related to redesigning Skype. I would love to learn more about your experience with communication apps. This interview will take about 30 minutes. I would love to chat with you about how the communication apps work for you.

If you are interested, please sign up using this form.

Do you mind if I record this session for note-taking purposes? The recording won't be shared with anyone outside of our team.

Warm-up questions: [Build rapport. Start with easy questions to get to know the participant]

- 1- Could you tell us more about yourself?
- 2- what application do you use for communication in your personal life?
- 3- What application does your company or school use to communicate with team members?

Probe into needs and behaviors

4- How did you get started using a communication app? [Motivation: What did participant hope to achieve]

- When did it happen?
- How did communication apps work for you?
- What was the outcome?

5- How often do you use communication applications? What motivates you to continue to use the application on a daily/weekly/etc.

6- Are you currently using the communication app at work or school?

Have you used a Skype application for communication?

- What was the very first app you were using? Why did you switch to other products?[Ask what other product]
- (If a participant is using more than 1 product currently) What do you use each product for?

7- You mentioned you are using Skype, Do you use the desktop version or Mobile App?

- Do you have a daily routine to use it?

- when and where typically do you prefer to use it? (Ex, At noon every day? At night? Any time)?
- Why do you use it in the mentioned time and location?

8- When was the last time you opened up Skype? Could you walk me through how you were using this app?[How people interact with existing tools]? Better to ask participant to show than tell

Observation & follow-up questions:

- Observe what features the participant is using and how the participant uses them.
- Ask what participants like or dislike about each feature, why they like/dislike each feature. Which features do participants not use and why?
- What's on participants' wishlist for the app?
- If participants talk about frustrations, ask why and their current workarounds.

Wrap-up

Thank you so much for sharing your experience and insights. Your answers will help our team build a better product. If you have any additional thoughts and comments, I would love to hear about them at any time. I can be reached at parvaneh.pouladzadeh@gmail.com. Hope you have a wonderful day.

Study 2: survey

In our previous research, we learned that skype is still alive in Canada and users still want to use Skype for their needs, in addition to some problems. But more data is needed to better understand the needs and whether to generalize to the larger population of skype users.

Research Goal:

This study focuses on better understanding users' needs related to Using skype, as well as better measuring the extent to which these needs are held by the majority of users.

Research Questions

- How communication tools could support users' needs to get the best quality for their virtual communication and video conferencing?
 - Which features/functions are useful?

Method & Recruiting

- Use surveys to collect data from at least 30 communication tools users
- Test survey questions with 5 volunteers recruited from our engineering team
- Send surveys to School X's Engineering school whose answers in our screener meet our recruiting criteria:
 - Use mobile and web communication product(s) at least once a week
 - Have been using digital communication tools products for at least 3 months

Survey Questions

1. Which Communication tool are you currently using for online meetings? [Assumption: people might use different tools]
 - A. Skype
 - B. Zoom
 - C. Microsoft Team
 - D. Webex
 - E. Discord
 - F. Other
2. Have you used Skype for your online meetings in the last 3 months?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. I have used Skype but not for all meetings

3. If so, which version of skype do you prefer to use?
 - A. Mobile App
 - B. Desktop App
 - C. Both
4. Have you had any difficulty in installing and using and creating accounts on skype?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Did not Attempt
5. Have you had any difficulty in setting up an online meeting?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Did not Attempt
6. Have you had any difficulty in sharing a screen?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Did not Attempt
7. Have you had any difficulty in sharing files?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Did not Attempt
8. In the past week, how often have you used Skype? [Frequency]
 - A. A few times per day
 - B. About once per day
 - C. 4-6 times per week
 - D. 2-3 times per week
 - E. Once per week
 - F. Did not used at all [survey ends]
9. Which of the following describe you better? [to get an idea how can improve the design of app]
 - A. I am using the skype for my online meetings
 - B. I am using skype for international calls
 - C. I am using skype because I like skype better than other communication tools
 - D. All of above
 - E. Other

10. What is your age?

- A. Under 18
- B. 18-25
- C. 26-35
- D. 36-65
- E. Above 65

11. Based on your experience with the Skype app(s) you are using, how essential were the following features? [What types of features do you care about?]

	Not Necessary	Nice to have	Must have	Does not apply
Screen sharing				
Messaging				
Group Call				
International Call				