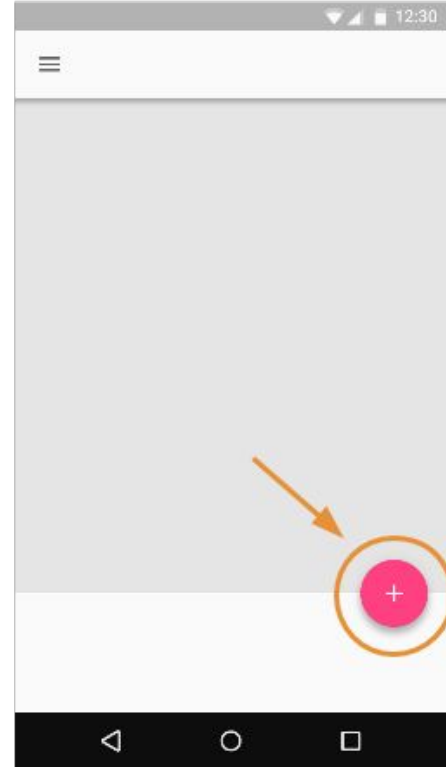# Research Report
-
H499Y

Steve Jones

Android Material Design's FAB component:
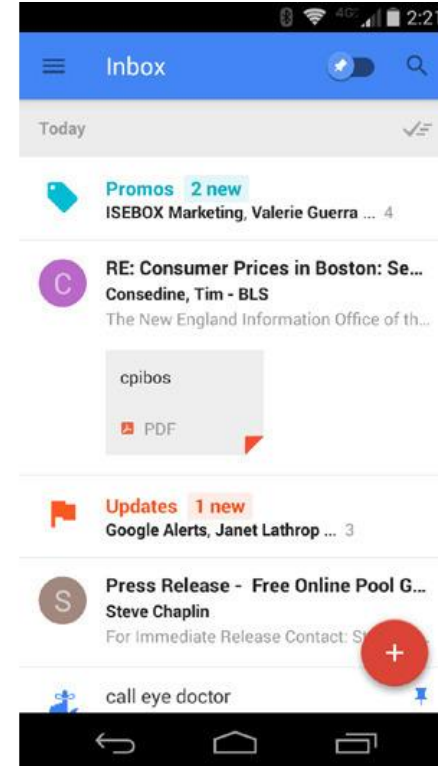
Good or bad UX design?

What is a FAB?

❖ FAB - Floating Action Button
  ➢ Circular button that floats above the UI
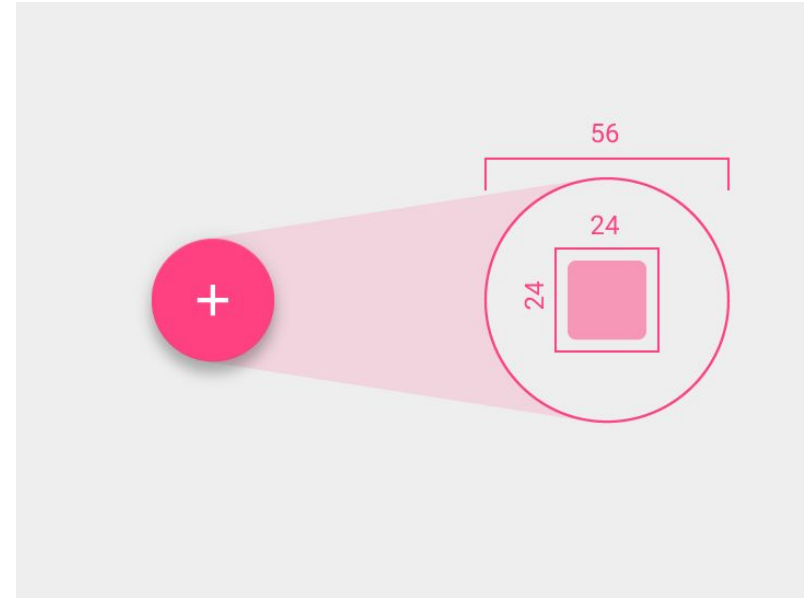 ➢ On top of every other UI element

Purpose of the FAB component

❖ "Used for a promoted action"
  ➢ Call to action buttons
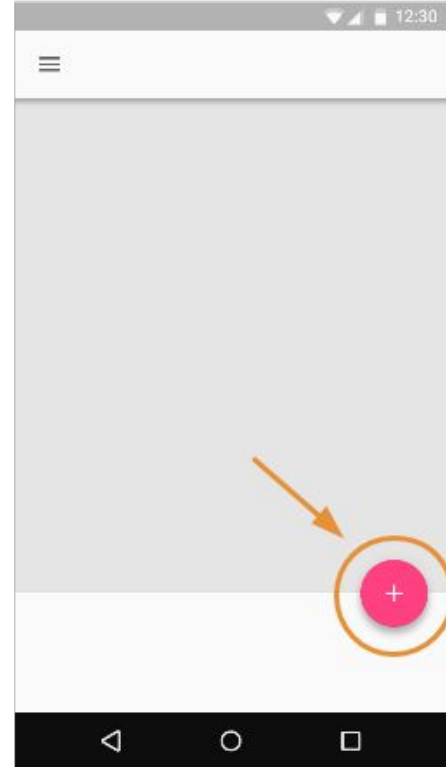 ➢ Meant to represent the single action users perform the most on that particular screen

Benefits of FABs

❖ Make promoted action prominent & always available
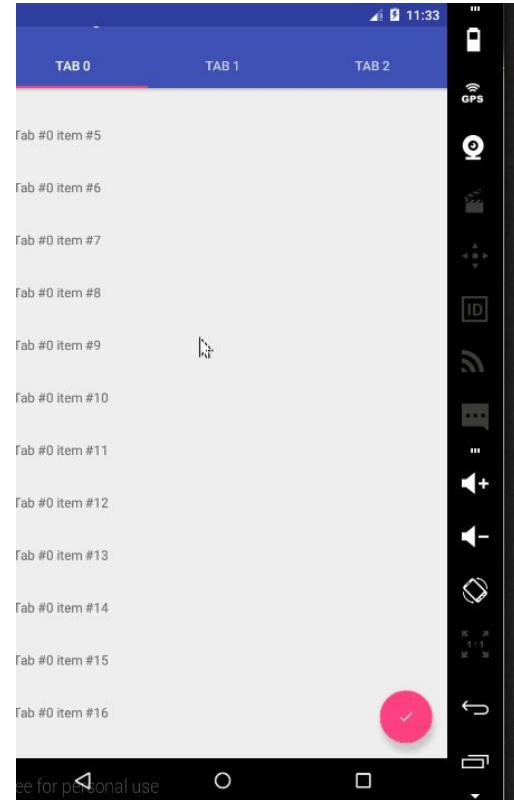❖ Fitt's Law
  ➢ Large button
  ➢ Close reach

FAB Issue #1

❖ Material Design - bold visual style

❖ Thus, FABs are strikingly hard to ignore and stand out

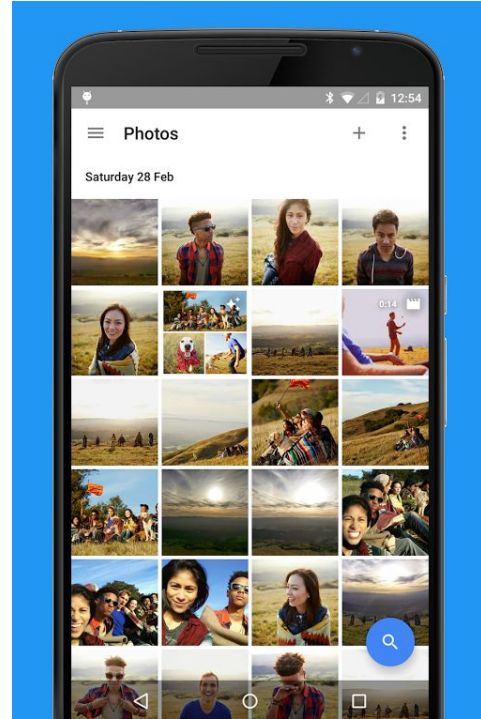# FAB Issue #2

❖ Take immersion out of the experience
  ➢ On top of every other UI element
  ➢ Adding FAB → automatically result in a UX that is less immersive

Issue #2 - Example

❖ Google's Photos App
  ➢ Gallery view, with a floating search button
❖ Primary Purpose - Most users just want to view photos
  ➢ Search FAB thus distracts the user from an immersive photo-browsing experience
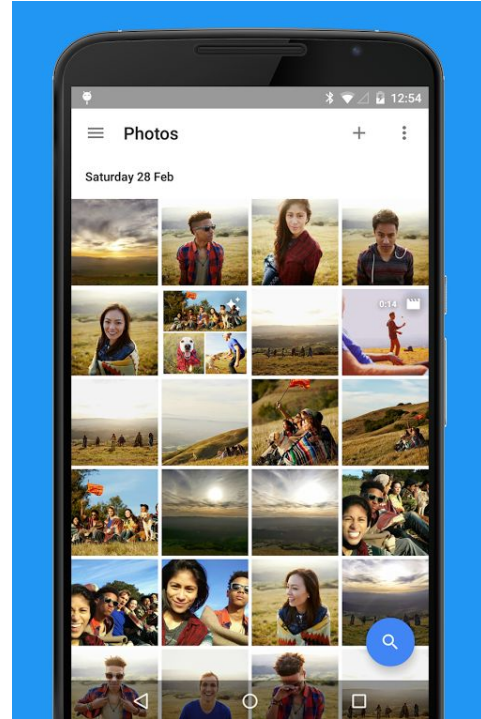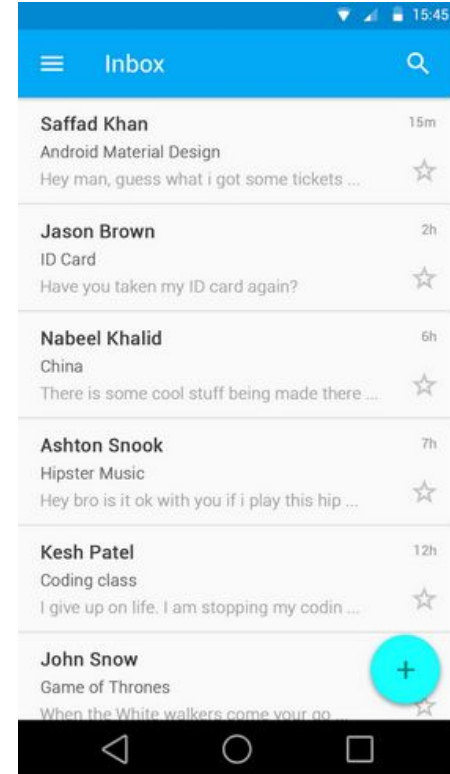
Issue #2 – Example

❖ Google's statement in guidelines

"Not every screen needs a floating action button. A floating action button represents the primary action in an application"

"The primary action is to touch images in a gallery, so no button is needed"

FAB Issue #3

❖ FABs stand out & stand in the way
 ➢ Take up real estate on the screen
  ➢ Block content

Issue #3 – Example

- ❖ GMail's Inbox App
  - ➢ List views - blocks right justified info
  - ➢ FAB blocking "favorite" button and time stamp
  - ➢ Especially problematic when: last item on list can't be scrolled up any further
- ❖ Proper usability - Entire column the width of the FAB has to be sacrificed (by repositioning the star button, timestamp, etc.)
- ❖ FAB takes up way more screen real estate than its size suggests
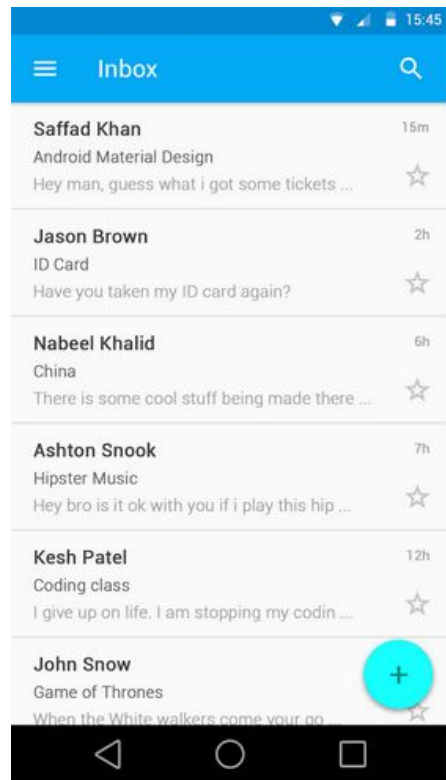
FAB Issue #4

- ❖ Promoted actions might not be used that often
  - ➢ 80/20 rule - users will use 20% of the features 80% of the time
  - ➢ FAB does this if feature is actually in that 20%
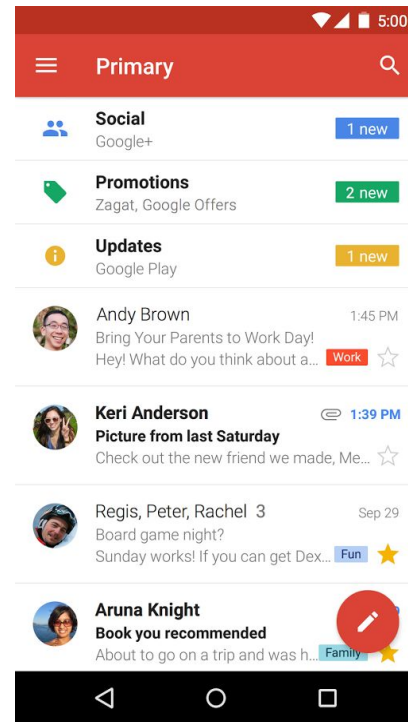
Issue #4 – Example

- ❖ Google's GMail App
  - ➢ FAB - compose button
  - ➢ Suggests primary action users perform - create an email
  - ➢ Studies show ~50% of emails are now read on a mobile device
  - ➢ Composing emails much less - users still prefer desktop
- ❖ Primary action - reading, not writing
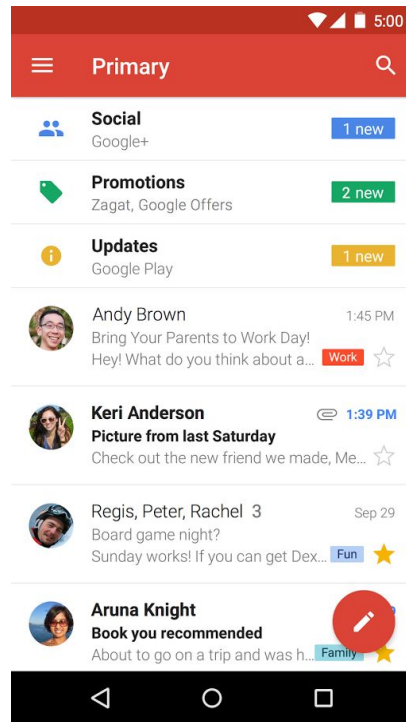
Summary

❖ FABs seem to provide good UX in ideal conditions

❖ Users don't only perform actions on apps, they consume content as well (if not more of the time)
  ➢ In actual practice, widespread adoption of FABs might be detrimental to the overall UX of the app