**ICK REASERCH PROJECT**

**Usability of**

A picture containing text, clipart

Description automatically generated

**Made by**

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**The goal of the project**

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks nowadays. It allows its users to share videos and pictures in a pretty convenient way - you upload a photo/video, put the location so everyone knows where you are having a vacation, tag your friends; or do none of that and spy on your crash or a former friend.

People are becoming famous by making great (or not) content, more and more businesses are setting up their pages on Facebook because it gives efficient ways to advertise. Companies can buy promoting on the wall of Facebook for other users what can give them huge ranges.

The aim of the project is to measure usability, functionalities and accessibility across testers with different level of IT skills.

**Brief look at Facebook**

Facebook, American online social network service that is part of the company Meta Platforms. Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes, all of whom were students at Harvard University. Facebook became the largest social network in the world, with nearly three billion users as of 2021, and about half that number were using Facebook every day. The company’s headquarters are in Menlo Park, California.

Access to Facebook is free of charge, and the company earns most of its money from advertisements on the website. New users can create profiles, upload photos, join a preexisting group, and start new groups. The site has many components, including Timeline, a space on each user’s profile page where users can post their content and friends can post messages; Status, which enables users to alert friends to their current location or situation; and News Feed, which informs users of changes to their friends’ profiles and status. Users can chat with each other and send each other private messages. Users can signal their approval of content on Facebook with the Like button, a feature that also appears on many other websites. Other services that are part of Meta Platforms are Instagram, a photo- and video-sharing social network; Messenger, an instant-messaging application; and WhatsApp, a text-message and VoIP service.

**Facebook’s target group**

As we can see over 50% of Facebook users are below 34 years old.

**Chart, bar chart

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Tasks

The tasks were as follows:

1. Create an account and log in

2. Set up profile picture.

3..

4. Find an email address with which you can contact the administrators.

5. Get on the page’s Facebook.

Criteria for tasks evaluation

The evaluation of the tasks will be done by the following criterias:

1. The time spent on the task
2. Number of solved tasks to the unsolved ones.
3. Comments of the testers.
4. Problems on the service’s side.

Research’s main assumptions:

1. The test was done on different devices connected to the Internet.
2. The devices used had different operating systems.
3. Timer starts when the person starts reading the first task.
4. The average time is calculated from the results of all testers.
5. The completion time is rounded to the full second.

Tested group

6 people took part in the research. It was a diverse group of people - aged from 20 to 42, with different smartphone skills.

The “Instagram proficiency” and “smartphone skills” were categorized according to the following thresholds:

**Low, Middle, High, Very high.**

Testers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tester 1** | **Tester 4:** |
| Name: Anastasiia Koloniari  Age: 20  Instagram proficiency: Low  Smartphone skills: Middle  Operating system: Android | Name: Andrii Feshchenko  Age: 20  Instagram proficiency: Middle  Smartphone skills: Very High  Operating system: IOS |
| **Tester 2** | **Tester 5** |
| Name: Kirill Egupov  Age: 21  Instagram proficiency: Middle  Smartphone skills: Very High  Operating system: Android | Name: Maria Feshchenko  Age: 17  Instagram proficiency: Low  Smartphone skills: High  Operating system: IOS |
| **Tester 3** | **Tester 6** |
| Name: Anna Lebed  Age: 42  Instagram proficiency: Low  Smartphone skills: High  Operating system: IOS | Name: Solomia Zdorova  Age: 17  Instagram proficiency: Very High  Smartphone skills: Middle  Operating system: IOS |

Tasks and results

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| № | Task description | Succeeded | Avg  time | Min  time | Notes |
| 1 | Find where the musician yungblud is having a concert tomorrow. | 6/6 | 54s | 12s | Task was completed by looking into the stories(last 24 hours) of an artist. One tester spent her time on discussing the songs of the artist |
| 2 | Publish 2 photos with your friend in one post, tag him/her. | 6/6 | 47s | 4s |  |
| 3 | Get the atmosphere temperature with the help of stories. | 3/6 | 49s | 5s | Appeared that not everyone could do that (probably because of the version of an app) |
| 4 | Save 3 posts to your “Saved” library. | 6/6 | 45s | 5s |  |
| 5 | Switch to another account on the same device. | 5/6 | 59s | 1s | One tester did not have a second account to switch |
| 6 | Make a story and add any GIF to it. | 6/6 | 50s | 5s | Android users complained about reduced resolution comparing to IOS |
| 7 | Add it to the highlights. | 6/6 | 27s | 1s | Some of testers had to create this section from zero, so it took longer |
| 8 | Find the phone number of your favorite sushi bar in your city. | 6/6 | 24s | 9s | It took some time for testers to define their favourite sushi-bar. |
| 9 | Add 2 friends to the “Close friends” list. | 6/6 | 39s | 5s | The new users took longer time to find the list |
| 10 | Send some user`s profile to your friend. | 6/6 | 21s | 6s |  |
| 11 | Find a setting which can fully clear your search history | 6/6 | 25s | 7s |  |

The test was done without serious issues, all the testers were happy to help and test the app and did it from start to finish without the breaks.

The issues occurred were mostly not connected with the UI, but rather to the versions of the app or operating system used.

After the usability test, all testers were asked about **how intuitive is the interface**, here is the number of given answers:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Not at all* | *Mostly intuitive* | *Very intuitive* |
| 0 | 4 | 2 |

We can conclude that for the major part of the tested group the interface was *mostly intuitive***,** which is a pretty good result for a social network with such a huge amount of functionalities.

As for the **desktop version**, the general conclusion can perfectly fit in one of the testers’ quote:

“I tried using the Instagram Web - it's like using TikTok Web - you can but .. what for? It's definitely the social media for smartphones at least because of the default aspect ratio and the point of stories which should be both recorded and watched on the smartphone. Instagram Web is just for web version existence - not for real usage”.

Compliance with heuristics of good usability

**1. Visibility of system status**

Upon entering the website, the user is constantly informed about the system status by seeing how much time ago the feed was refreshed. It is very readable, each message is understandable as it is always given as a response to user interaction with the system. This ensures that the user does not get lost in the website and feels comfortable there.

**2. Match between system and the real world**

The research showed that mostly testers were realizing where to find necessary functions. It works similarly to the way every social networking app works, so when you find yourself on your page, it doesn't take long to understand how to do something.

**3. User control and freedom**

Instagram allows users to unsend the messages together with all mentions about them on the screen of a receiver (which is a unique and really great feature as in most social networks users can read the message on the blocked screen of a smartphone even in case it was already deleted). Users can also delete and archive any post they want and clear any comment they do not like on their page which is very convenient.

**4. Consistency and standards**

There are some tasks that can be done in different ways. For example one can switch to another profile by double-clicking the icon in the bottom panel or directly through their profile options. Overall the service is pretty consistent, in the smartphone version everything is designed well.

**5. Error preventions**

The only error me and the testers noticed was a “Could not connect to the Internet” error which is stated in a very clear manner so the user can fix in in a second himself. No other errors were found, the service is working correctly.

**6. Recognition rather than recall**

Most of the functionalities and pages are intuitively clear, excepting the “Make a story” option which took me some time to find after an application update.

**7. Flexibility and efficiency of use**

Application allows its users to reach the most needed pages from every view of an app, such as “My profile”, “Feed”, “Search” and “Add publication”. Instagram is absolutely efficient and flexible in use.

**8. Aesthetic and minimalist design**

The choice of colors and the distribution of components in the app is very sophisticated for the eye. Though there is a vast number of functionalities, there’s no overload of a page with the buttons and information, which is good.

The only issue is that messages in Direct sometimes are not displayed in the order they were sent. But lately I did not see this issue anymore.

**9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors**

Messages are written in formal format and clearly indicate the error and how to resolve it.

**10. Help and documentation**

The documentation exists and is understandable. Answers on the most popular issues are placed directly in the Settings tab of the app, which is confident because users are not obliged to search for them independently in Google.

Analysis

* **Pros**

Pretty intuitive;

Easy to use;

Huge functionality but nothing redundant;

No overload of a page with the buttons and information;

Readable and understandable feedback of a system;

Allows to advertise efficiently for the big group of people.

* **Cons**

Difference in quality of downloaded stories and posts between Android and iOS users;

Sometimes bugs with displaying messages in Direct occur.

Noticeable lack of functionality in the Web version.

Too much advertising in feed and Stories from outside Instagram.

Taking into consideration the results of the test and the above, I would recommend reducing the amount of advertising, work on the delivery of messages so they are displayed in the correct order and to redesign the web version so it does not consist of 50% blank space.

Interview with the constant user of Instagram

The interview took place on 9th of January 2021 and was with an Instagram blogger and Influencer who is sharing her life with almost 70 000 of her followers.

* *“Why / what for do you use Instagram?”*
* I love sharing my art and creativity with others! I am inspired by the comments and support from people.

Instagram gives me a lot of opportunities. New acquaintances, proposals for filming / traveling, earnings, self-development, creativity and inspiration!

* *Which features of it do you like most?*
* Posting and making Stories, of course! I make from 15 to 30 of those each day.
* *What is in your opinion the main advantage and disadvantage of the service?*
* From the advantages I can distinguish the following: opportunity to prove yourself, opportunity to do business, support from the audience which helps me to go through the darkest times of my life. Bad things I can tell you are certainly negative comments from my haters (as I am very sensitive, it sometimes hurts me), and that it really takes a lot of time.

Conclusion

The results of the usability test are showing that Instagram is one of the top-rated social networks worldwide not by coincidence.The testers paid attention to the multitude of possibilities offered by the Instagram platform while maintaining the high intuitiveness of the app. The transition between platforms though is not very smooth because it is much more optimized for IOS users than for Android. The Web version is lacking smartphone’s functionality (e.g.: creating posts and Stories) but if to treat it as an unnecessary extension to the mobile one (nobody uses it anyway), it is a great application which allows users to share their lives with the followers and businesses to advertise efficiently. Such things undoubtedly had a decisive impact on the current, unrivaled position of this service on the Internet.