Project Proposal - Users and Use Context for Instagram Users

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ABSTRACT

This project aims to apply the methods for UX research described in "Observing the User Experience" and "Think Like a UX Researcher" to study the experiences of Instagram users. The study will involve conducting user research to gain insight into how Instagram users interact with the platform, their pain points, and their overall experience. The findings will be used to generate recommendations for improving the user experience of Instagram, with a focus on enhancing user engagement and satisfaction. We firstly will provide background information on Instagram as a social media platform and its importance in contemporary social and cultural contexts. Discuss the role of UX research in improving the users experience of digital products and services, with a specific focus on Instagram. Then we have outlined the specific goals of the study and the research questions that will guide the research. We continue by selecting the methods that will be used to collect the data and the target group that will be involved in our study, as well as the discussion about how the participants will be recruited and selected for our study. Finally, we discuss the project timeline, including milestones and assigned tasks for each team member.

INTRODUCTION

Instagram is a renowned social media platform launched in 2010. It has evolved into a versatile platform for sharing images and videos, connecting with friends and family, promoting businesses and brands, and discovering new trends and ideas. Its latest features include messaging, live streaming, IGTV, and Reels, making it an essential tool for businesses to reach a broad spectrum of audiences through targeted advertising and influencer marketing. To enhance digital products and services, UX research is critical in understanding user needs and preferences. Instagram's success can be attributed to its capacity to provide a user-friendly platform that caters to the needs of its users. Our study on Instagram users seeks to contribute to the platform's continued success by improving the user experience and enhancing engagement and satisfaction.

This project aims to apply the methods of UX research to investigate the interactions of Instagram users with the platform, including the challenges they face and

the benefits they gain. Through user research, we hope to gain insight into how and why Instagram users utilize the platform, the areas where they encounter obstacles, and the aspects that contribute to their satisfaction. We aim to research Instagram users to gain insights into their needs and provide recommendations for enhancing their user experience.Our goal is to generate recommendations for enhancing the user experience of Instagram, including improvements to the platform's features, design, and functionality.

PROJECT GOALS

As a "pseudo-consultant" for Instagram, our primary goal for this project is to gain an acute understanding of the overall experience of Instagram users. This would include understanding their underlying information needs, as well as their level of satisfaction and/or discontent. In turn, we will generate recommendations on how to better meet those needs, and resolve their areas of dissatisfaction so as to improve their user experience.

What do we hope to learn?
We look forward to discerning their behavior interacting with the platform, recurring problems and their particular inclinations. The behavior could include - but is not limited to:
- What are their motivations for employing Instagram?
- What specific information do they search for and how do they find it?
- What kind of content do they like to view?
- Do they use Instagram for business purposes?
- Do they use it to tout their personal social identity?
- Where else have they looked for this information?
- What workarounds have they needed to implement to solve their information needs?
- What changes do they feel would be most beneficial to the platform?

Why is it important to learn it?
Comprehending such information would allow us to better understand the information needs and particular inclinations of the users. No services are foolproof but we can attempt to rectify them and suggest solutions to make their experience with the platform more efficient and enjoyable. In addition, understanding this use case for these users could help Instagram be more successful with this type of user persona with future product releases.

What questions will our study answer?
Overall, we expect our research study to answer the following questions:
- What areas of Instagram are the most useful and successful?
- Where does the Instagram platform fail at serving the needs of this user persona?
- What ways could Instagram resolve these issues with their platform?
- What enhancements do current customers want to see in the product?

WORK PLAN

In order to gather data to help determine the information needs of Instagram users, we will be utilizing two research methods, surveys and diary studies. We have chosen these methods, as they provide two perspectives into what types of searches Instagram users are doing, and how they utilize the app. Survey's will allow us to see how users think they use the app and what information they look for, while diary studies provide data on the actual day to day usage of Instagram. We will use both methods with our participants, as we believe that while each research method provides strong data to use in determining information needs, there are also valuable lessons to learn by comparing how users think they use the app against what they actually do while on it.

Recruitment for this will be done by asking friends and classmates to participate in the survey and following diary study. This is being done as a way to minimize variables, as by asking for participation from our contemporaries, it minimizes the potential age range of participants, keeping the collected data to a smaller sample size overall. From this group, we will ask for anyone from casual Instagram users (open the apps at least daily) to heavy users (spends at least 2 hours on the app). The surveys will ask basic questions about why people are utilizing Instagram, and what they do when browsing the app. These questions include "What do you look for on Instagram?" and "What are some of your favorite accounts to look at?" as these types of questions will provide a profile of the participants, as well as why they utilize the app, and what information they hope to gain from it. After the survey, users will spend the next few days recording their usage of Instagram in a diary, making notes as to what searches they perform, why they opened the app,etc. This diary will be used to again view what information users are searching for on Instagram, and also allows us to compare this data to the surveys, to look for any differences between the two. Upon gathering and looking into the data, we will be able to provide suggestions as to how to improve the user experience in a way that will allow for more efficient and quicker information discovery.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SCHEDULE

Team members will coordinate their activities through weekly meetings and consistent communication through GroupMe. All relevant files will be stored in a shared Google Drive folder.

Date Due	Task	Parties Responsible
3/13	Project Proposal	Raquel, Clark, Paula, Sandra, Sharvil, Vijay, and Angela
3/27	Instagram use research	Raquel, Clark, Paula, Sandra, Sharvil, Vijay, Angela
3/30	Creating screening questions	Sharvil and Raquel
3/30	Creating survey questions	Sandra and Clark
4/14	Creating diary guidelines	Paula and Angela
4/3	Reviewing screening questions	Clark and Angela
4/3	Reviewing survey questions	Sandra and Sharvil
4/14	Screening participants	Vijay and Paula
4/14	Explaining conditions to participants	Raquel, Clark, Paula, Sandra, Sharvil, Vijay, and Angela
4/14-5/1	Collecting data	Raquel, Clark, Paula, Sandra, Sharvil, Vijay, and Angela
5/5	Cleaning data	Sandra and Raquel
5/7	Analyzing collected data	Sandra, Sharvil, and Clark
5/7	Generating suggestions	Vijay, Raquel, Angela, and Paula
5/11	Final Project Report	Raquel, Clark, Paula, Sandra, Sharvil, Vijay, and Angela