SENG 310 - Assignment 2

Richard Wagner (V00767821), Alex Lam (V00195731),
Jonathan Bowen (V00735637), Di Mei (V00783547)

2015-05-26

Contents

1 Interviews

1.1 Interviews and Typical Users:

A semi-structured interview was conducted on four undergraduate students from the University of Victoria (male and female) between the ages of 19-23 in their second year or later of an undergraduate program to gather requirements for Good Money, a financial assistant app.

1.2 Interview Questions:

1) Demographics (optional)

1. Age (written response or I prefer not to respond)

   (a) Gender (written response or I prefer not to respond)

2. What is your highest level of education completed? (selected from list: post secondary, some university, finished university, etc.)

3. Are you proficient with using software for everyday tasks? (are they able to use computer to help them improve their lives?)

4. Do you own a smartphone? (are they applicable for a smartphone application?)

5. Do you have a regular income? (to understand if features could be added related to an income)

6. Is financial management/having a monthly budget something that you currently need to keep track of? (would this potentially replace something the applicant already does)

7. How do you currently manage your monthly expenses? (get more ideas from the user for the app)

8. Where do you regularly spend your income throughout the month (eg. education, rent, food, etc)? (figure out good categories for spending)

9. What do you currently do to save money? (ideas for how the app could make recommendations)

10. Are you currently saving money for traveling or purchasing something? (one of the selling points of our application is that the application can help people to find out how long does it take to achieve their saving goals)

11. Do you think purchasing information is a very private thing to yourself? (someone might not want others to see what they purchase because they think it is private)

12. Do you allow someone who you trust to help you manage your expenses? (if the answer is yes, we can sell our app to him/her)

13. Do you wish you handled your money better than you currently do?

14. What do you think keeps you from managing your money better than you currently do?

15. Are you living in residence at UVic?

16. Are you on a meal plan?

1.3 Description of system's users based on interviews

Interviewees were owners of smartphones who self-reported proficiency with using software applications for everyday tasks. Half of the interviewees had a regular income. Interviewees expressed different degrees of satisfaction with their ability to handle their finances, from wishing they were more financially-savvy to feeling like they handled their expenses well. All four of the interviewees had no misgivings about giving an app access to financial information.

1.4 Differences in responses from expectations

Unexpectedly, two of the four interviewees reported having a system for handling their money (one used a spreadsheet and the other used pen-and-paper book-keeping). One of the interviewees assumed that we were developing a desktop application throughout the course of the interview. We were also surprised to find that one interviewee wasn't interested in a financial planning app.

2 System Tasks (List of tasks the system must support)

1. Setting up a profile. The app charts out a budget on the basis of a user's income and projected needs. In order for the app to provide its core functionality, then, it needs to have information about the user's income, goals, and priorities. Good Money also needs to be synced to a user's bank account(s), and so all of this information needs to be given by the user. This feature is a precondition for all of the other functionality of the app, and so is of primary importance.

2. Viewing weekly progress. At any given time, a user needs to be able to track their progress with respect to their budgeting goals, as well as see how much money is available for different categories of purchases. This is an important and frequently used feature that needs to be easy and convenient.

3. Adjusting financial needs. If users' financial profile changes at any time for reasons other than their spending habits (which the app can track automatically), users need to be able to update their profile accordingly. For instance, a raise, an unexpected monetary gift or an unforeseen expense need to be entered into the app so it can adjust its budget plan accordingly.

3 Personas

We have two personas: Sally Barnes and John Mark.

3.1 Sally Barnes Persona

Sally Barnes is a 4th year geology major at UVic. She is currently taking 4 courses to finish her degree and she has a part time job as a waitress at Swiss Chalet. She loves shopping, but she also wants to save enough money so she can eventually move out of her parent's house after she graduates. Between school and her job, she doesn't have much time to balance her finances and judge whether she should buy more clothes. Since she's always playing with her new iPhone, she wants an app that can help her sort out her income and expenses and track her savings for a new rental suite.

3.2 John Mark Persona

John Mark is a 2nd year software engineering major at UVic. Has a phone, but tries not to use data because he is on a low data plan. John is highly tech savvy. Independence is important to him, and so he lives off campus and works at a web design company while he is at school. His goal is to make it through school without relying on his parents, while developing his career. So far he's succeeded. Lately, however, John is feeling like he isn't socializing or having much fun in his busy life, and so he's thinking about ways that he can take time out of his busy schedule to do fun things with his friends.

4 Task Scenarios

4.1 Basic Budgeting

Sally wants to figure out where to start with budgeting. She is, frankly, not aware of what she needs to do to organize her spending habits. She accordingly creates an account with Good Money and grants the app access to her bank accounts. Sally is asked a series of questions about her spending habits in various categories of expenses, as well as the fees for graduation, her final academic courses,

and rent. Sally enters each of these fields in sequence. The app then takes all of the information about Sally's income, goals, and regular expenses, and generates a concrete budgeting plan for her. Sally views the amount of "free spending money" she has for the week for shopping, buying food, etc. She also views a budget summary page on which a visualization of money free to spend in the future is displayed in an intuitive, colourful way. Sally now has an intuitive, easy way to access a plan that will reliably allow her to graduate, afford rent for when she moves out, and still spend any leftover money in a responsible way. This is a representative scenario for the app, as entering profile information is a necessary action that users must take in order to make use of any of the app's functionality. One of the most useful functions of this app is to provide an easily understandable medium-term projection that takes into account the user's whole financial situation.

4.2   Expense Projection

John would like to branch out from from the university life and explore the area around him, but feels uncomfortable spending money around town because he doesn't have a stable income and wants to be financially independent from his parents. He decides that he wants to go to a snazzy event downtown with a couple of his friends. He wants to know how much he is safe to spend that night, while still being able to pay rent and pay for education. He opens the Good Money app, and the home screen shows him a summary of the amount of money he has left to spend for the week to stay within budget. His "extra expenses" and "food" budget options are about 35 dollars short for the exorbitant entry fee at this event. He then selects the "add expense" button from the home screen, and enters 35 dollars into the "how much?" field. His monthly projected budget alters accordingly by decreasing the amount of free spending money for the next four weeks. He is explained the repercussions of spending this money, and asked to confirm that the consequences are acceptable. He decides that they are, presses ok, and his current "extra expenses" field increases to $69–enough to attend the event. He then goes to the event and the app monitors his expenses that night. He stays under budget. This is a good example of a regular use of the app. Users will often find themselves in a situation where they need to spend more than their budget allows for the week–for instance, there are often holidays or special events that would require more money than an average week. Critical information that the app provides users is whether, and to what degree, there is an overshoot for a given expense. If one is considering committing themselves to an extra expense, the app also gives this person a projection of the repercussions for making the expense before they go out and make it.

4.3   Budget Analysis

Sally is wondering whether she's stayed within budget this week. She opens the Good Money app and presses the "Weekly Progress" button on the home page. She is presented with a visualization of the spending amounts in each of her several spending categories. It appears she has spent too much on food but hasn't spent any of her "free spending money". As a result, she sees that her weekly budget is not in deficit. She then decides to hold off on going out for dinner that night after classes and goes home to eat. This is an activity that users will likely use every time they log onto the app. Accordingly, it should be made accessible. We anticipate that the most frequent functionality users make use of with the app is just routinely checking their balance, as well as where they are with respect to their weekly goals.

5   Appendix

5.1   Transcribed interview notes

(Excluded from GitHub Upload for Privacy Reasons)