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Device Usability

Device easy to use: Flipboard

-What is the application/device?

Flipboard is a fairly new mobile application for iOS. Their slogan is “your (pocket-sized) social magazine.”

-What task does the application/device perform?

This application seamlessly combines rss feeds, facebook posts, twitter posts, and the most important news and information posts into an easy to navigate reader. Users can specify their interests as well as their facebook/twitter information and let them system compile a beautiful layout with tons of information for them. I use the application mostly for looking over these various outlets for news and information that people are talking about in general news and technology news.

-Present at least one way in which this application/device is easy or enjoyable for you to use?

It is really easy to get this application set up and goes through all the information that is important to you. Uniformity is key to this device. It treats my brother’s tweet about the advantages of having a black berry with the same weight as the New York Times’ post about the biggest tech moments of the year. As far as usability goes it is just really touchy and interactive. There is a fun feeling you get when physically flipping through your feed of information. All the animations are very smooth and it is a completely enjoyable experience. It has completely replaced the Wired, New York Times, facebook, and twitter applications on my iOS device.

-How might someone else find this application difficult to use?

I think a lot of people would find some of this very silly. I’m very selective over people I follow on twitter and facebook. I don’t know what algorithms they use but I can see people being annoyed with old classmates nonesence scribblings being lumped in with their news. One could find it extremely difficult to sift through a lot of posts for some actual news. People that are not that into social media could find this application annoying. People that are unfamiliar with touch screen interfaces may find the tactile way of interfacing with the material a little difficult.

Device difficult to use: The new coffee maker I got for Christmas.

-What is the application/device?

It is a Better Homes and Garden 10 cup Grind and Brew coffee maker. My old coffee maker shut down and stopped working a couple months ago and I received this one as a gift for Christmas to be a replacement.

-What task does the application/device perform?

Making coffee is its main function. It can make it from grounds or beans, it also has a timer to setup for automatically making it in the morning or whenever you like.

-Present at least one way in which this application/device is difficult for you to use?

This device has at least five button presses for me to get some coffee brewing. I’m used to the one button press and brew. With this you have to set the length of time, set if you are using beans or grounds, and set if its half full or a full pot before you can begin the grind and brew process. In the morning I need a cup of coffee to deal with making coffee with this coffee maker. One thing that I’ve seen standard on every coffee maker I’ve ever had is a clear area to measure how much water I put in. This device does not have that; it has a weird measuring stick in the area that you put the water in that is impossible to gauge. It doesn’t help that the carafe is stainless steal so you can’t measure how much water you are putting in from that either.

-How could this difficulty be resolved?

This major problem has been solved by millions of coffee makers already by just having the area that you put the water into have at least some part of it be clear with indicators for how many cups of coffee you are putting in. Better Homes and Garden doesn’t have to try and reinvent the wheel here, this problem has been solved by thousands of coffee makers already.

-Do you think other users would have a similar negative reaction to the application/device?

Yes I do. People like to know how much coffee they are brewing. People don’t like to fiddle with tons of extra feature questions before getting straight to the brewing process.

-Is there anything positive about the design of the application/device?

It’s a very good-looking device (style points). With everything set right the night before and the water and beans already in place it makes a pretty good cup of coffee. It’s the setting up that will take some getting used to. It’s too bad I accidently threw away the gift receipt.

::Overall, what are the aspects of the applications/devices’ design that contribute to your positive and negative experiences?

The usability of everything was what I looked for the most in these applications/devices. I looked at both of them from perspectives of when they would most be used. Both are used on the go. While the coffee maker had a user experience that slowed me down, flipboard gave me an enjoyable experience that sped me up. And by ‘sped me up’ I mean it has taken over the functionality of checking many different social and news feeds to just one simple and beautiful application.