

1.1 The Role of the Ux Designer

Ion Rus



McDonald's new self-order system



The McDonald's restaurants by now iconic all over the world first open their doors in 1940 San Bernardino California. One important reason that contributed to the fast-food chain success that we know today it was its revolutionary at the time "Speedee Service System".

In short, at the time the popularity of drive-in restaurants was rising but in spite of that the service was slow and this meant that the food most of the times did not arrive hot by the time it was delivered to the car. The Speedee Service System developed and implemented by the McDonald's brothers was based on the assembly-line principles thus, making everything more efficient which led to shorter ordering times.



McDonald's new self-order system



From the 1940s up to current days McDonald's did made some changes to the ordering process, mainly moving the place of order from outside to inside of the restaurant. This aspect was part of the redesign process of the restaurants.



McDonald's new self-order system



Since the 1990s McDonald's has been experimenting with the idea of replacing employees with electronic kiosks. In 1999 McDonald's tested the first E-Clerks Chicago Illinois.

The major change came about in 2016 with the "Create Your Taste" electronic kiosks. According to the New York Times, the main reason of introducing the self-ordering system was due to “ slower food delivery to customers, caused by more items on the menu”. The system, which was first tested in 2016, was mainly used by families and groups and the intention was to create a more personalizable experience.



McDonald's new self-order system

The big picture



One can clearly see that the success of the McDonald's franchise is partly due to its way of processing orders. The Speedee Service System enabled the first restaurant to differentiate themselves on the market which mainly translated into a better user experience. We can see that through the evolution of the McDonald's franchise this aspect has not changed that much rather it became an industry standard.

A new change appeared in 2016 with the introduction of "Create Your Taste" electronic kiosks. This I think is yet again a game changer for the franchise. In my opinion, the electronic self-ordering option contributes to better the user experience in the restaurant.

To take myself as an example, I like electronic kiosks. I generally do not like to stay in lines and even if I'm hungry I would rather change the venue than staying in line to order food regardless of the restaurant.

I found now that the experience at McDonald's to be much more pleasant. I can take how much time I like to decide what I'm going to buy. There is zero chance that the cashier will mix the order, it much faster and I spend less time at the restaurant.

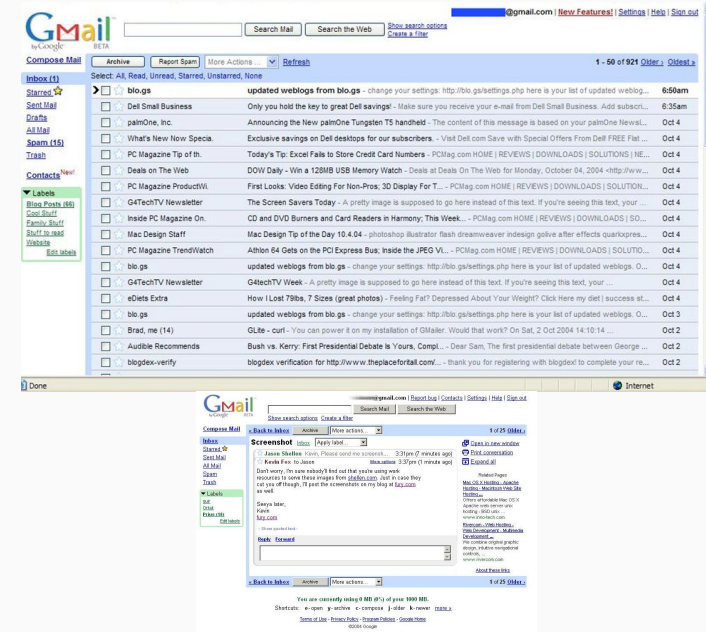
Thus, I believe the new self-ordering system is an improvement when it comes to user experience and currently, I would not go into a McDonald's if it doesn't have the electronic kiosk, I would rather for a vegan restaurant instead.

Gmail's New User Interface



First launched on April 1 2004 Gmail was Google's response to email providers at the time. The platform significantly differentiate itself from the beginning since at the time it offered 1 gb storage, a feature that was quite uncommon. This storage trend progressed throughout the years as Google steadily increased their storage in the years to come.

But moving beyond storage what Gmail's brought new to table was its user experience. Due to Google's search engine background they implemented the same search principals in the way the user interacted with the platform. The features consisted of conversation threading of emails, grouping several messages between two or more people and labels which replaced the conventional folders which provided the user more flexibility in the way one would organise the email. This new twist on how to create an email service were well received and the features were soon copied by competitors.

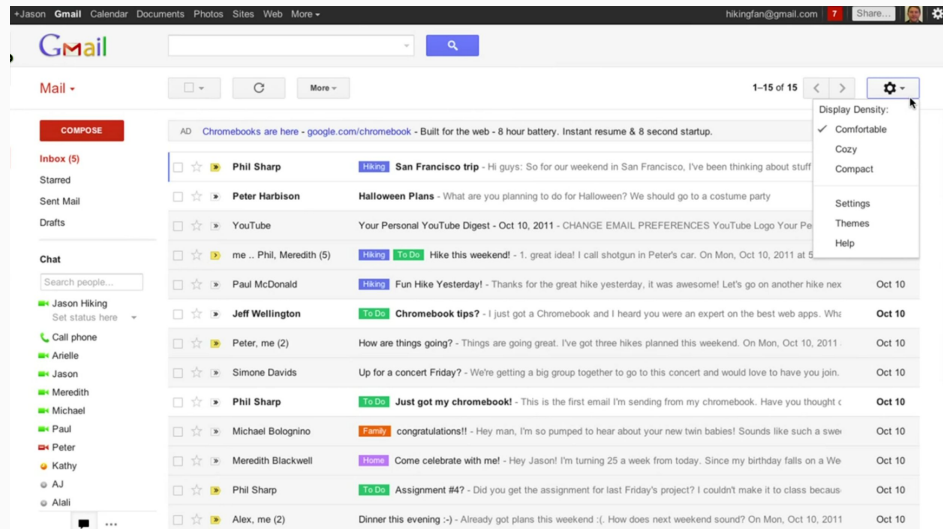


Gmail's New User Interface



In 2011 Gmail was gifted with a redesign, this time the focus being on simplifying the platform through the use of minimalist principles. This change was consistent with larger scale redesign that Google implemented at the time. The major redesign elements included:

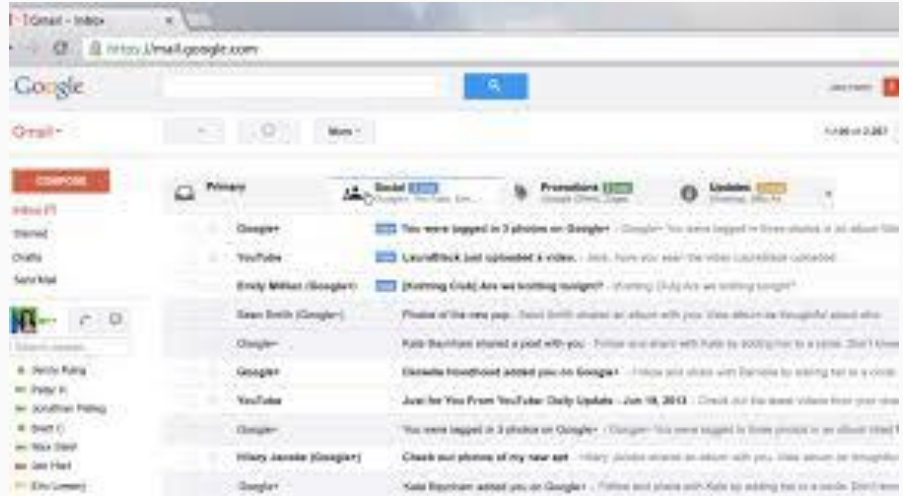
- Streamlined conversation view
- Configurable density information
- New themes
- Resizable navigation bar



Gmail's New User Interface



The Tabbed inbox came along in 2013 when Gmail inbox received the feature to allow the users to categorise the emails. The five tabs consist of, Primary, Social, Promotions, Updates and Forums.

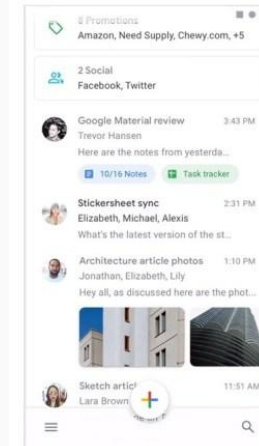


Gmail's New User Interface

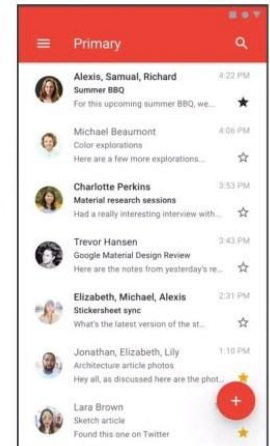


Now to current days, Google has recently introduced to Gmail a new redesign in accordance to the company's material design language that is implemented all over their platforms. According to article "Gmail's biggest redesign is now live" publish in Verge there are new interesting feature to look out for:

- A new To Do list that lives in collapsible menu on the far right side in which you can drag emails
- Option to add the extensions from the G Suite marketplace
- Attachments can be seen at first glance without opening the email
- User can revert back to the older style if wanted
- Email snoozing
- Email nudging which brings email to the users attention that might be time sensitive
- Smart replies comes in conjunction with this giving the user ready-made replies



New Design



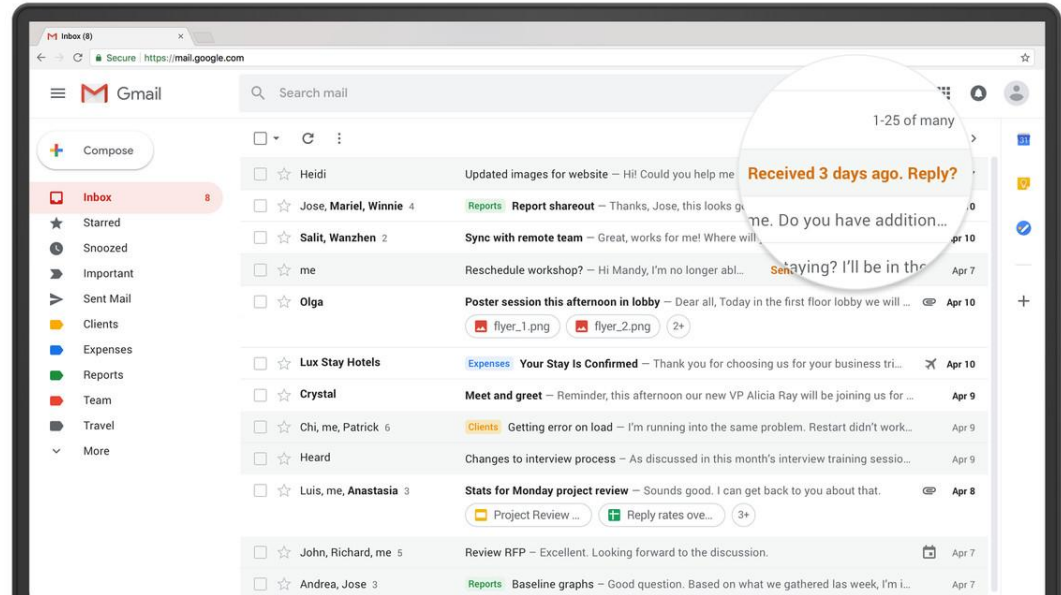
Old Design

Gmail's New User Interface



Jacob Bank, lead product manager for Gmail which was interviewed in The Verge, pointed out that the new update as much as it is a visual improvement is also a security update. Thus, from now onwards suspicious emails are highlighted with a big red box and a new feature has been introduced that allows the users to set an expiring date on a message.

This means that if you are sending a link containing information to another person you can control how long they have access to that link even if they are using another email service.



Gmail's New User Interface

The big picture

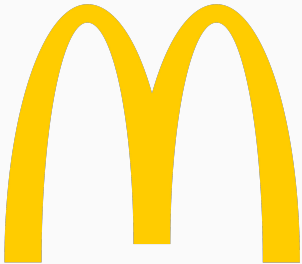


Gmail is a great example as to how a product can be improved over time by having the user at the center of all developments. Starting with the beginning Gmail always brought something new to the email providers market, features that always contributed to a better user experience. I believe that this their core strength which made Gmail so popular.

Regarding the new version I think yet again those principals come across, as the update tackles the security concerns that most users have in our days, is bringing new interesting features that make Gmail more integrated with the rest of Google's products and lastly a fresher Ui that feels up to date and in congruence with Google's ecosystem.

Speaking from my own experience, I've been using Gmail for the past 5 years and I'm very pleased with the service. Before Gmail I had Yahoo mail which in its attempt to make it more attractive ended up being clumsy to use thus I chose to switch and never look back.

Resources



- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/18/business/mcdonalds-introduces-screen-ordering-and-table-service.html>
- <https://nordic.businessinsider.com/mcdonalds-restaurants-then-and-now-2018-1?r=US&IR=T>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s#Automation>
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