Reflection – Human Factors – Davy Nolan - 17330208

The app that I have used recently is Instagram. I will discuss the main design goals for the developers of this application in terms of user experience, the aspects of human performance which are relevant to the user experience and also the problems with the current design.

User experience is how an application behaves and how it is used by people in the real world. Many things must be taken into account when thinking of user experience such as the way people feel about the application, and their satisfaction when using it, looking at it, opening it and closing it. Analysing Instagram, once the application is opened by the user, they are brought to the main homepage consisting of an infinite feed of photos that continues on as the user simply scrolls down the page. This is fairly straight-forward for new users to pick up and instantly understand what to do. Along the top of the screen, you can view the "stories" of the users you follow. A purple ring circles the stories you haven't yet viewed, clearly displaying which stories you should click on. The top and bottom taskbars of the application contain clear self-explanatory icons such as the paper airplane icon which represents the direct messaging feature, allowing a user to message other users and the magnifying glass icon, representing the search feature, allowing a user to find users by their usernames.

The whole appeal of Instagram is the interaction of people through photography and reactions. The famous "like" button allows users to mark photos which they like by either pressing the heart icon or simply double-tapping the photo. This makes it extremely easy for anyone to interact with users on the application. You can also comment on users' photos, creating a thread of conversation under the posts. These features create a personal user experience allowing users to follow other users and even build possible friendships and acquaintances. The constant refresh of new photos filling up the user's homepage grabs the user's attention, causing users to want to scroll for minutes on end. There really isn't much need for strong cognition and memory abilities to use this application – there's no need to remember the photos you liked because the application stores your liked photos in a library for you to go back and view whenever you want.

One of the design issues that comes to mind with this application is the bright white background. This made it difficult to use the application at times, especially in a dark room or at night time. Some photos also did not look as great on the white background as they would on a darker one. Luckily, Instagram solved this design problem by introducing "dark mode", giving users the option to switch between light and dark visual settings.