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Group CIRCLE

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Motivation and Vision

The problem my group is finding communities. My proposed solution is a mobile application that helps students find and join student clubs and/or events by browsing or searching on the application's database. There are two sides to this solution: the student side and the club/event organizer side. The student side is where the student is able to search for and join clubs/events. The organizer side is where the club and event organizers advertise their club/event, provide information about them and communicate with club members/event goers.

I have proposed the design of the student side only. I chose to focus on this aspect because it is the most complicated aspect of the app and also the most significant, since the app is aimed to help students find communities and not the other way around. My designed is envisioned to help the user by providing a faster, more accessible and more intuitive way to find communities. It helps the user find exactly the communities that they want, in a simpler way; by making it easy to filter category, date, time, and place, all while staying on one screen. Using the app students, it is not a hassle to find communities anymore, since the process can be completed in just a few taps.

There are a few limitations. Since clubs have to enter their information in a restricted manner (for the sake of being organized, so that the search is more efficient), there is not much room for creativity in club advertisements. Since my design is fairly minimalist, the only the students in a club can communicate with each is through a link to a Facebook group chat or something of that sort.

Rationale

In my design, simplicity is key. While opening the application for the first time, there is no need to create a new account since you can login with the utorID and password. There are only three main screens in the application: the center "YOU" screen, the left "GROUPS" screen and the right "EVENTS" screen. More specifically, the "GROUPS" and "EVENTS" screens help the user to join student groups and clubs respectively, and the "YOU" screen accumulates information about those groups and events you have signed up for. The "YOU" screen also shows your "Friends" list, which helps you keep track with what clubs and events your social circle is involved in. Also, notifications can be seen on this screen, in one tap.

Maps are used as the main tool to select and join groups and events, which makes for a more intuitive, lighter user experience. I have designed the app with a specific aim: to allow the user to do a task in a minimum number of taps. Hence, the main way for a user to filter events or groups is by maneuvering the map by panning and filtering the category, time and place using lists and not the keyboard. Although the user can search by keyword, this is the last option and is only used when really needed. The tabs that show the club and event information is concise but thorough, since the information is organized.

What I learned:

All of the test participants felt that the problem of finding communities is a problem that needed to be solved for a long time now. The idea of my application as intuitive and fast solution to this problem was appreciated. The minimalism and simplicity of the design of the prototype was also very well received. The participants especially felt that the "snap-map" (exactly the word they used) like tool was a great way to make for a much more intuitive user experience.
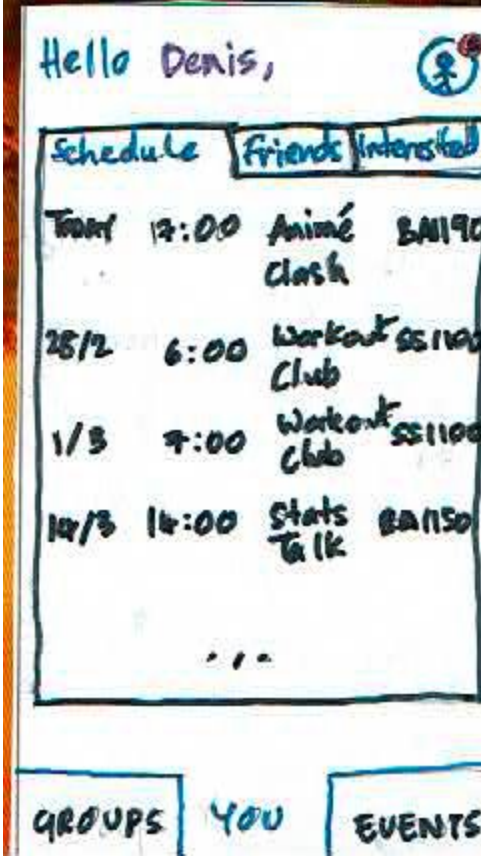
Most problems that they faced were with small details in the prototype such as the visibility of the buttons, etc. I learned that small details such as those, play a bigger role in user experience and usability in general.

Also, I found that the participants were better at using the pages of the application that has less clutter. Information, if organized and concise, has a more comfortable effect on the user. So perhaps, the pages that hold more information could be made even more concise and limited to make the user feel more comfortable using the app. However, in doing so, to prevent information being lost, we would add the ability to click (or hold on the club/event mentioned) to reveal the details that are hidden.

URL TO VIDEO:
https://bit.ly/2V8GWka

First Page: Main Schedule Screen

- Notifications circle on top-right of screen was not obvious or visible enough to several participants.
- One participant did not know he could click on the items in the schedule because of its cluttered look.
- Participant did not see the buttons in the bottom; thought they were just text; confused as to why they "GROUPS", "EVENTS" were in closed boxes when "YOU" wasn't.
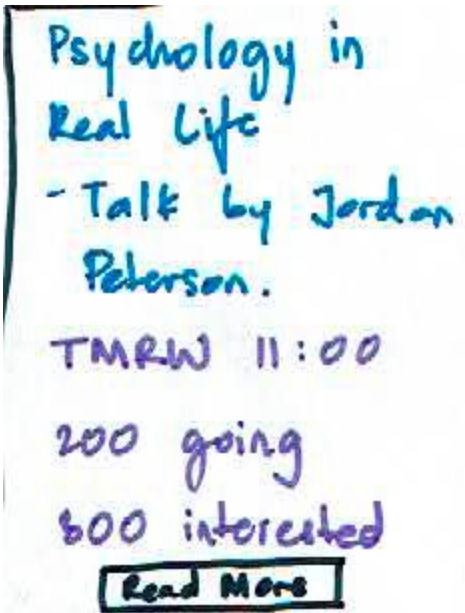
Updated design:

- Made the notifications button a red bell icon and bigger.
- Put HELLO DENIS is all-caps, to make it more obvious that we are on the "YOU" page.
- Changed the "YOU" at the bottom to a "person" icon; included an arrow on top of the icon to make it more obvious that we are on "YOU" page; color coded it blue to do the same as well.
- Made the items in the schedule to be bigger and have boundaries so that they appear less cluttered and makes it more obvious to click on it; the location cannot fit but will appear when clicked on, which reveals hidden information.
- Changed the "GROUPS" button to an icon of people figures and the "EVENTS" button to a ticket icon holding hands to make it more obvious that they are buttons.

Second Page: Event Information Tab

	● Participant commented that information was too cluttered. ● A lot of information that is not required by a participant who is just browsing is shown.

Updated design:

	● The Heading (name of the event made) is made larger for a cleaner look. ● The description of the event is removed to reduce clutter; this can be accessed using "Read More".