Improving User Experience of DigiYatra: Addressing Onboarding & Privacy Challenges

What is DigiYatra?

DigiYatra is a government-promoted digital initiative aimed at enhancing the travel experience for passengers. Designed for seamless, paperless, and contactless travel, this initiative utilizes Facial Recognition Technology to authenticate a passenger's credentials, establishing a digital identity for efficient verification at various airport checkpoints. Currently operational at 13 airports, there are plans to extend its reach to an additional 24 airports by this year.

Why is there a need to improve the UX?

Enhancing DigiYatra is crucial due to ongoing user complaints. People are expressing dissatisfaction with the app's user interface, face scanning feature, and concerns about privacy, especially regarding the sharing of Aadhar numbers. To address these issues, a more substantial investment in in-depth UX research is necessary, paving the way for a significantly improved and user-friendly DigiYatra experience.

Research Methodology

I have thoroughly researched by reviewing multiple news publications from various agencies like The Wire, The Hindu, Hindustan Times, and India Today. In addition, I have thoroughly examined an extensive report on DigiYatra by NITI Aayog and explored the government website to gain a comprehensive perspective. I will be thoroughly going through everything I have gathered and understood so far in the next section.

User Pain Points

1. <u>Onboarding:</u>

   - **Coercive and deceptive:** There has been multiple reports where the travellers are somewhat forced to register for DigiYatra. Despite it being purely voluntary, the officers at the gates (Delhi airport) were including the registration process as a mandatory process while getting into the airport where they would direct the travellers to look at a camera and capture the facial id which will then be used to register the travellers into DigiYatra.

- **Complexity**: The onboarding process might be perceived as complex, especially for users unfamiliar with technology or facial recognition. (Requires linking with Aadhar via Digilocker and a photograph of yourself to finish up).
- **Lack of trust & Data sharing concerns:**
  - Potential lack of trust in the government and data security practices could deter users from signing up.
  - Users might be hesitant to share sensitive information like Aadhaar details and facial scans.
  - Despite being tagged as a government initiative the app is not owned by the government, but by a consortium called the Digi Yatra Foundation whose shareholders comprise the Airports Authority of India (govt holds a 26% stake via AAI) and five private airports, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi. The government does not provide any funding for its implementation, and airports are required to spend on their own.
- **Accessibility**: Onboarding should be inclusive and accessible for users with disabilities or limited tech literacy.
- **UI Design**: The design of the application has been seriously ignored and needs a revamp. They released a newer version 3.2.0.1 where they claimed to have enhanced the UI/UX. Despite the enhancements, there have been a lo of complaints about the UX and the UI does not seem to be appealing or informative to the standards.
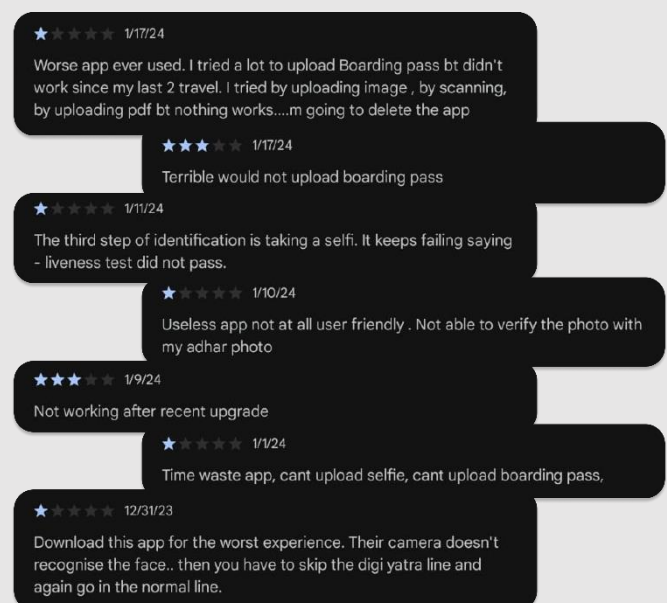
2. <u>**Privacy**</u>:

- **Data security fears**: Users might worry about data breaches and misuse of their personal information.
- **The Digi Yatra policy** aligns with data protection laws set by the Government of India. However, with the recent passage of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, and pending rules, there are concerns about its broad powers to exempt government agencies. Similar exemptions are present in the Digi Yatra policy, allowing access to passenger data for security agencies and other government entities based on existing protocols. The policy also mentions the Biometric Boarding System's ability to adjust data purge settings for security needs, raising questions about data retention. Clear insights into these aspects would enhance understanding and transparency.
- **Lack of transparency:** Lack of clarity about how data is collected, stored, and used could create concerns.
- **Control over data**: Users might feel they lack control over how their data is used and shared.

- **Alternatives to facial recognition:** Some users might prefer alternative biometric options or opt-out of facial recognition entirely.

Creative Solutions for Improved User Experience

1. <u>Onboarding:</u>

   - **Simplified workflow**: Streamline the onboarding process with clear instructions, progress indicators, and visual aids.
   - **Offline functionality**: Allow users to register and store data offline for later activation at the airport.
   - **Data minimization**: Explain what data is required and why, emphasizing minimal data collection practices.
   - **Privacy-focused language**: Use clear and reassuring language to address privacy concerns and explain how data is protected and used.
   - **Incentives and rewards**: Offer incentives like faster security checks or priority boarding to encourage sign-up and adoption.
   - **Accessibility features**: Implement features like screen readers, voice commands, and alternative input methods for diverse users.
   - **UI enhancement**: To provide the users with a smooth and responsive UI which consists of only the required elements and also helps simplifying the workflow for the onboarding process.

2. <u>Privacy</u>:

   - **Granular data control**: Give users granular control over what data they share, who can access it, and for what purposes.
   - **Transparency dashboard**: Provide a platform for users to access their data, track its usage, and manage permissions.
   - **Opt-out options**: Allow users to choose alternative identification methods or opt-out of facial recognition entirely.
   - **Data anonymization**: Implement anonymization techniques to protect sensitive information while still enabling personalization.
   - **Educational resources**: Create informative content explaining data security measures and user rights.

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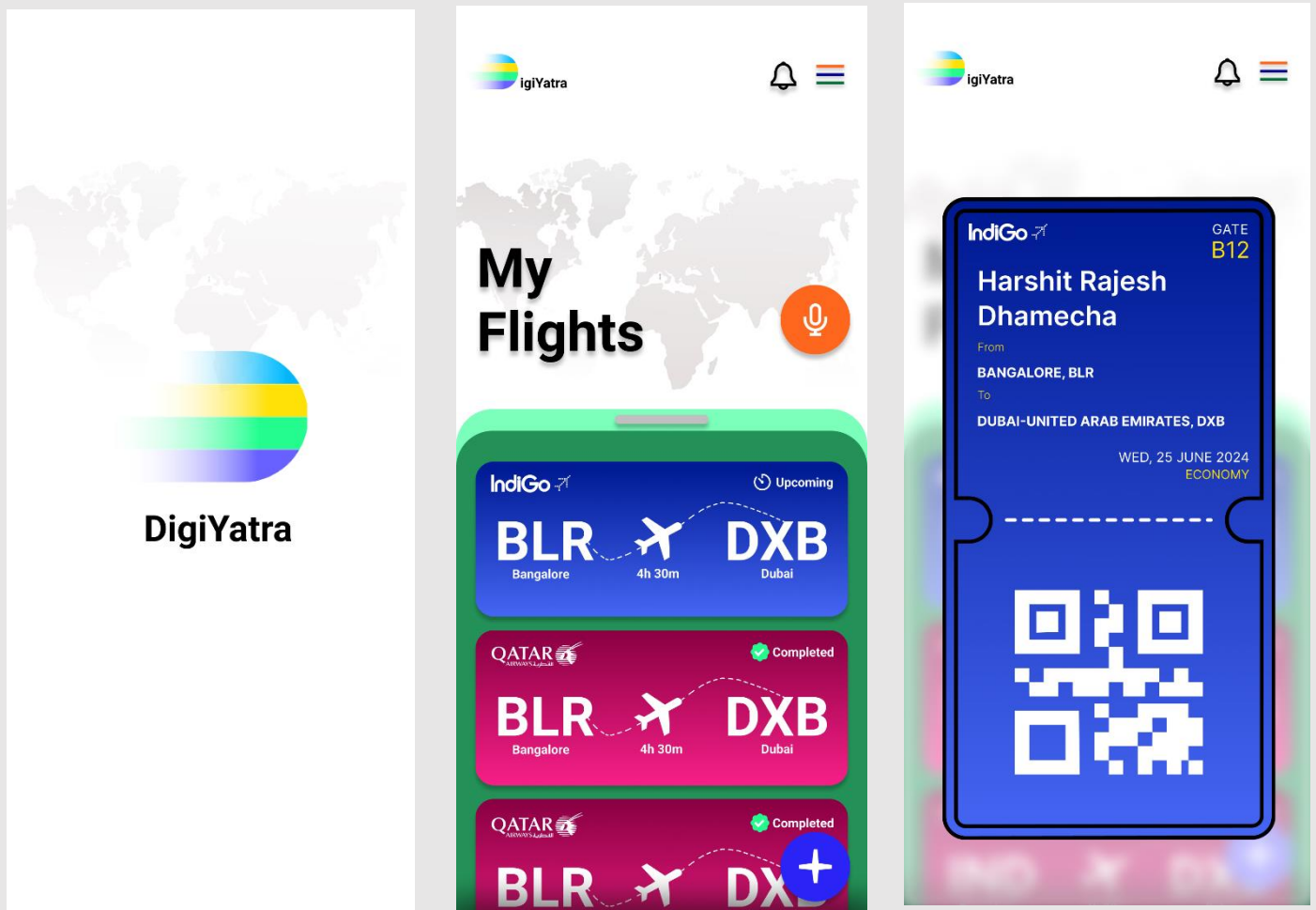
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High Fidelity Mock-ups

Click the link below to access my Figma file which contain the Mock-ups

Figma Link

Here is a sneak peek of the work 😊

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