A Software Survey of Meeting Scheduling Applications
Group 11

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ABSTRACT

A key use of human communication using computers is to plan in person meetings. Often this requires the coordination of many users so many tools have been developed to enable this. This report looks at several existing solutions.

Author Keywords

Consumer Applications; Calendaring; Novel Interfaces, Natural Language Processing

DOODLE POLL

Description

A scheduling system such as Doodle strives primarily to achieve one thing: Have a group of participants reach an agreement on a time and place to meet.

As such, there are two primary tasks a user of the system will want to accomplish: Creating a new event and Responding to an event invitation. This critique will focus on those two tasks.
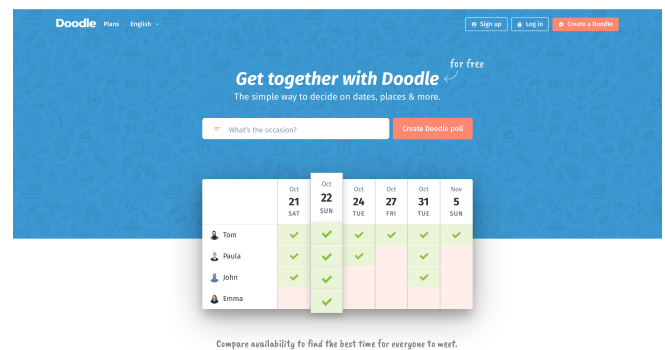
Critique

Creating a new event
From a new user's perspective, Doodle does a good job at keeping its design language (button style, icon choice etc.) in accordance with popular modern practice. The homepage [[https://beta.doodle.com]] lists only a few options with the most likely next step (Create a Doodle/Create Doodle poll) made clearly the most prevalent among them.

A text entry field inhabited by the "What's the occasion" placeholder gives is given immediate focus upon loading the page. There may be some unhelpful redundancy between the two separate "Create Doodle poll" buttons made available. Both fulfill nearly the exact same functionality (the difference being that the button next to the form will populate the "Enter title" field on the event creation page with the contents of the "What's the occasion" text field.
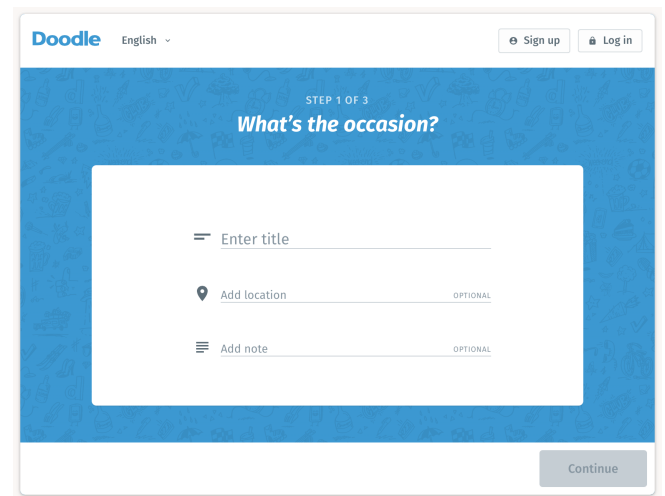
The first step on the event creation page is to outline some information about the occasion. Something lacking here is a clear way for a user to cancel the creation of the new event. Simply leaving the page or pressing the back button in the

browser accomplishes this, but this may not be obvious to every user.

The second step presents a dialog for selecting dates for the event. Although the creator can select as many days as they like in this dialog (these will be the options participants choose from), events are effectively limited to single days. Beyond selecting multiple adjacent (but still independent), there is no first class method for creating an event spanning two or more days.

After an event has been created, it is given a unique URL that can be shared with event invitees. The creator can register to be notified of activity within their event and is given control over finalizing the date once she/he deems that a sufficient number of people have voted.

Voting on/Responding to an event invitation
Going to an event URL, an invitee is presented with the homepage for the event. The event homepage does very little in terms of guiding the user towards what they are meant to do. There is a somewhat inconspicuous text field with the greyed out placeholder "Enter your name" as well as boxes for the user to vote on the proposed dates. Doing something as little as giving the name field focus (as was done with the Doodle's index) would at least guide a new user in the right direction.

NEED TO MEET?

Figure 1. Need To Meet Homepage

Critique
"Need to Meet?" is a meeting scheduling website that helps users enter to select mutually agreeable meeting times. Other than a noticeable lack of certain features (notifications of when the meeting was decided) certain ways of interacting with the website lack discoverability, particularly the button to open the calendar view when an attendee is selecting their available dates and times.

High Level Goals
There are two high level goals for the website:

- Creating a meeting event and showing available time slots

- Indicating when you can attend the meeting

Tasks
Figure 2 shows the diagram for the major tasks users of "Need to Meet" do. These include:

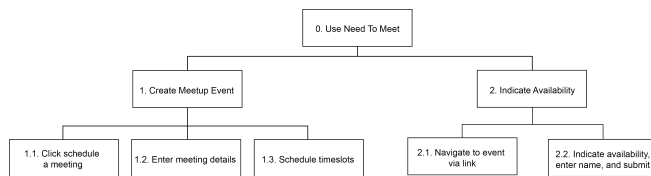1. Creating a Meetup Event to get availabilities of attendees

Figure 2. Task Diagram

(a) Click schedule a meeting
(b) Enter meeting title and duration, optionally add email for correspondance
(c) Using a calendar interface select the dates and times (optionally send people invites through the website)

2. Indicate Availability

(a) Navigate to the event via the link sent by the host
(b) Indicate availability, enter name, and submit

GOOGLE MAIL/CALENDAR?

Critique

High Level Goals

Tasks

OUTLOOK?

Critique

High Level Goals

Tasks