

Context

Discord is a text and voice communication software that allows users to join specific servers and channels alongside other users. When "subscribed" to a specific server, notifications are provided to alert the user of new content. When using a computer, the alert will present itself as a red dot placed atop the software icon within the dock (this example is specific to Mac users).

Nature

The issue with the notification system used by discord lies within the fact that the communities users belong to multiple servers and direct message conversations. As a result, notifications often stack and the user is required to search out the specific content that is related to the alert. As seen in Phase 2 and Phase 3, alerts are identified within Discord using small grey tabs alongside the server (Phase 2) and channel (Phase 3). As the user moves through the new content, the alerts are removed. However, this often means selecting multiple channels and scrolling varying distances to locate the new content.

Framing

According to ISO 9241-210:2010, a positive user experience is a direct result of the effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction of a process. This is where I believe the Discord designers have gone astray. They have attempted to tackle a difficult issue in that users can join an unlimited number of servers that have within them an unlimited number of channels. To provide fluidity amongst users, they've setup the system to always take over where the use last left off across every channel (by date/time if a user returns to a channel, they will not have moved from that location).

Recommendation

Considering the high level of interaction that takes place across such a diverse landscape, Discord should move to an alert system that provides a dashboard of changes similar to a news feed. This dashboard would allow for the clearing of alerts as well as the option of redirecting to the main thread for additional context. Centralizing the new content into a hub will improve upon the effectiveness and efficiency while allowing the user to more immediately arrive at the content they want also resulting in a boost in satisfaction maintaining consistency with ISO 9241-210:2010.