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Design Project 4: Written Evaluation

In 2016, while at a party, I watched as my friends took turns going up to the phone connected to the speaker and adding songs to the queue. I began to think about the limitations of current music platforms – one person’s phone is the source of music for everyone at parties, bars, and in cars. Each of these platforms neglected the fact that music is innately social. At that moment, I came to the conclusion that music should be democratized not monopolized. From 2016-2020, I developed a platform, called Mr. Party, where a person can start a party and connect his/her phone to a speaker. Then, other users in the same location can join and vote on what music they want to hear!

In the four years since Mr. Party’s conception, I have conducted an immense amount of research. For example, I have devoted hundreds of hours to ensuring the application was technologically feasible. Once I determined its feasibility, I dedicated thousands of hours to design and development. Since the application became such an important part of my life, I have talked about it with practically everyone that I encountered throughout college. During these conversations, I was able to validate the idea, get feedback, and truly understand the problem inside and out. Furthermore, in the last four years, I have conducted numerous beta tests through TestFlight to get more feedback. The version available on the iOS App Store today is the result of countless iterations based on the feedback that I received from users.

Based on my research, I have concluded that the problem does not only apply to a specific population. As a result, the application is not built for any one race, gender, or age group. Although the problem impacts all populations, I have been targeting high school/college students. This is because my research has shown that these users are able to pick up the idea quicker and typically have more opportunities to use the technology.

When I originally came up with the idea of Mr. Party in 2016, the world was a much different place. Unfortunately, due to the social distancing mandates for COVID-19, it is no longer feasible for groups to get together and use the party functionality. I used the fourth design project as an opportunity to address this new limitation. My Adobe XD design showcases a new piece of functionality which I have called global parties. In a global party, users are not required to be in the same location. Instead, a user can join one of their friend’s global parties and the music will play synchronously with their friend’s music. As a result, friends will be able to enjoy music with one another while being remote!

The design and evaluation methods that I employed in my design process are outlined in the design evaluation document. First, I chose to review the design against the guidelines, principles, and theories that we discussed in lecture. I chose this evaluation method because the ideas are widely accepted in the industry. In the process of reviewing the design, I learned that it gets more difficult to evaluate as the metrics becoming increasingly abstract. For example, it was much easier to review the design against guidelines than it was to review the design against theories. This is because theories are more vague than guidelines. Next, I evaluated the design based on the specific affordances of the technology. Although this was useful to think about, I kept getting distracted by thinking about what a MacOS version of Mr. Party may look like. As a result, this taught me that it is important to evaluate the designs for each platform independently since the modes of interaction will differ. Finally, I performed two cognitive walkthroughs. My justification was that I am trying to build a consumer product so it is important to know the opinions of consumers. The cognitive walkthroughs showed that I came up with an idea that will improve the user experience since everyone was excited about the changes. In conclusion, the design evaluation was effective for validating and improving the design.