Good and bad design

Assignment 1

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Lab class Nº P2
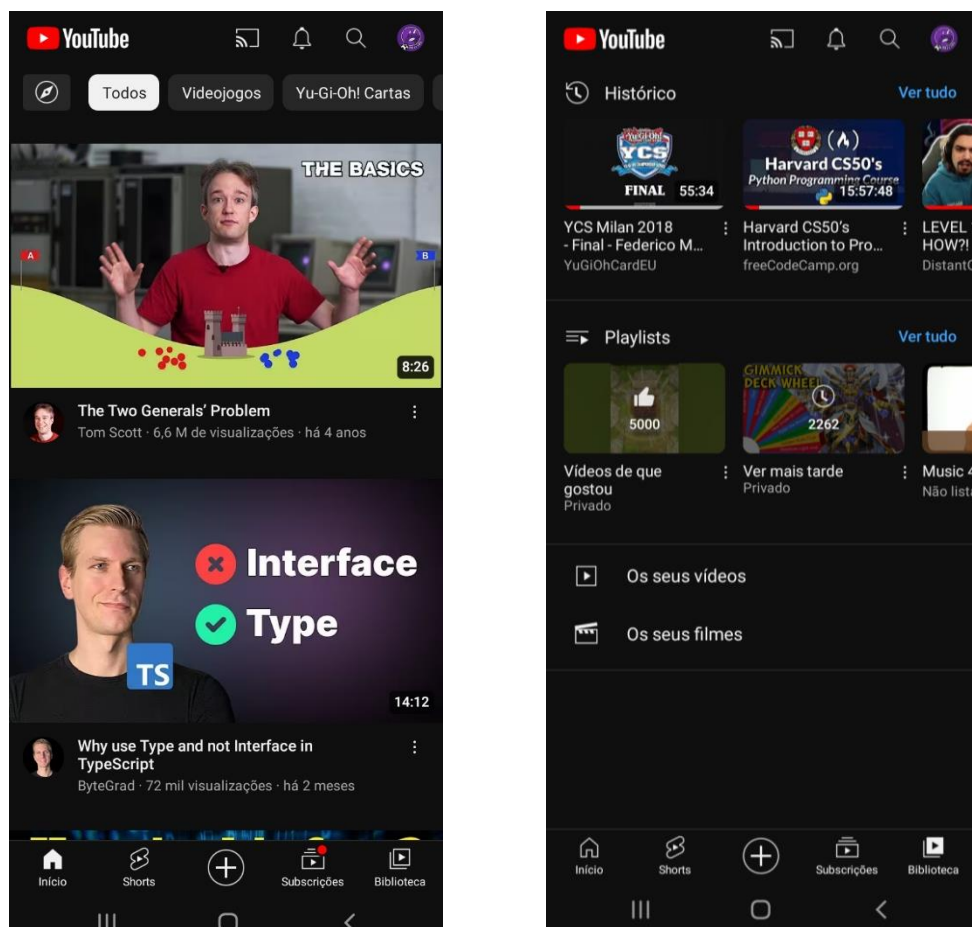
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Month 10, 2023

Good design: YouTube Mobile App

YouTube is the most popular online video platform, allowing users from all over the world to share videos with each other. The main goal of the YouTube app is to allow users to watch videos on their mobile devices, anywhere and anytime they want.

In my opinion, the YouTube mobile app is very intuitive and simple to use. The main component of the app are scrollable lists, with big pictures (thumbnails) that capture the attention of the user. To achieve the main goal (that is, to watch videos), all the user needs to do is scroll and click, which anyone can easily learn. In fact, even little children, who don't know how to read yet, are able to figure this out and use the application.

Another relevant usability aspect is the bottom bar, which allow users to easily navigate through the main parts of the application when holding the phone with just one hand. This design is not exclusive to YouTube, being found on many other mobile applications, but it is really useful here, allowing the user to navigate between their home page, library, etc.
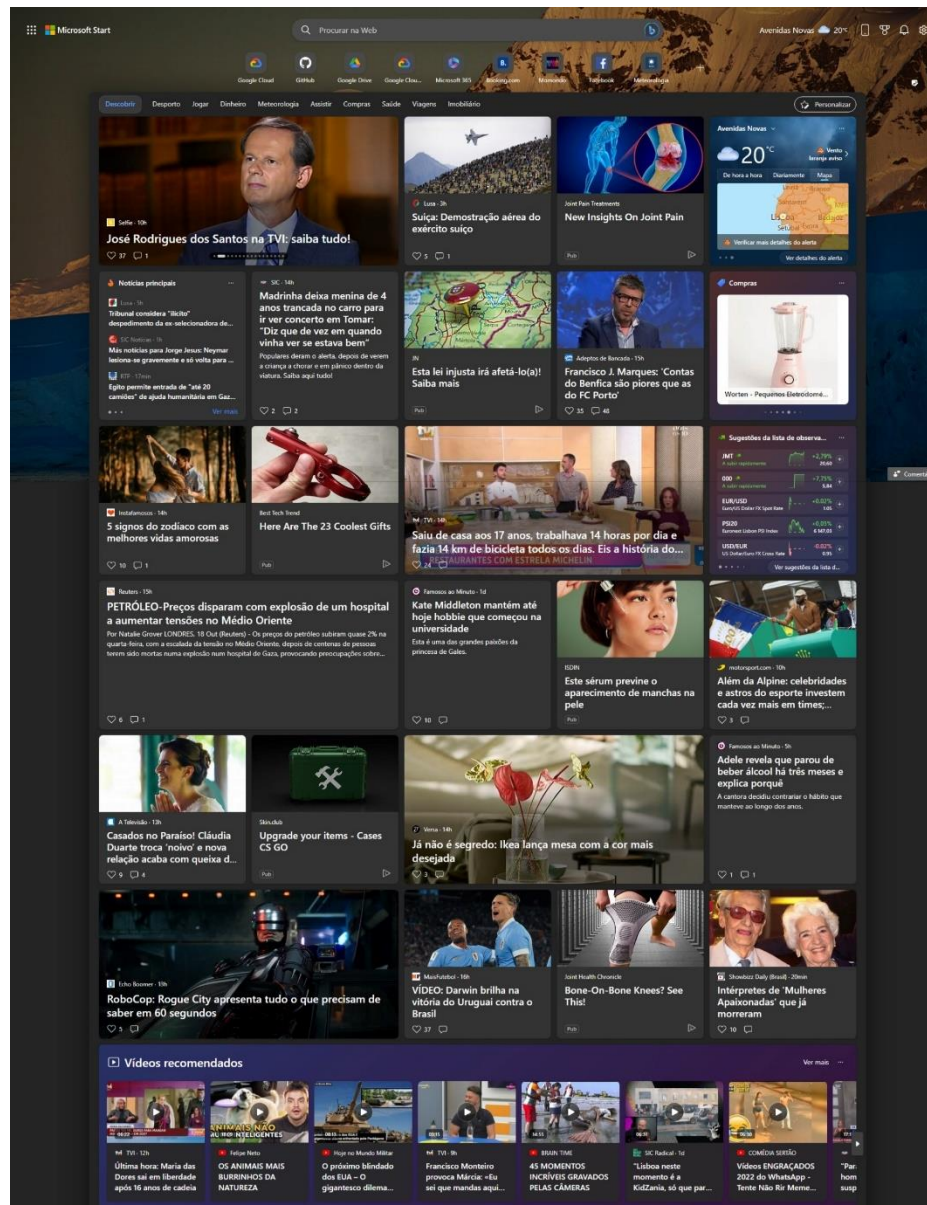
Another nice feature is that, just by rotating the device, the video automatically fills the screen horizontally, in order to make use of the extra space and make you focus on the video, while still keeping quick access to other features that were available on the vertical display (like/dislike buttons, comment section, etc.) through buttons on the bottom of the screen.

Of course, no application is perfect, and YouTube has its flaws as well (for example, managing playlists on the mobile app can be a little annoying), but overall, I believe the YouTube app is well-designed and it is very easy for all kinds of users to perform the main task, which is simply watching videos.

Bad design: Microsoft Start (Microsoft Edge's Home Page)

Microsoft Edge is a browser developed by Microsoft and serves as the default browser of Windows since Windows 10. Microsoft Start was designed to be its home page, with the objective of simplifying and speeding up the process of catching up with news and content that you are interested in, by collecting information from several sources and showing them on a single web page. In theory, it is a good idea; however, the implementation wasn't very successful in my opinion. Here is an example of how the page looks when you open Microsoft Edge:

One of the main issues of this design is that it is extremely cluttered. News, weather and other content is just "thrown" at the user without any kind of logical organization. As if it was not overwhelming enough, throughout the page you find image slideshows, videos automatically playing, and also advertisements "disguised" as real news or content (which might be intentional, to trick people into clicking them).

Another aspect that annoys me is the inconsistency in the design. Some of the news cards have pictures, others only text. Some are double the size of others for no apparent reason (even when the text isn't even enough to fill the whole card). This randomness hurts the practicality of the website and makes it look messy.

There are also some other small details that make no sense to me. For example, why is the "Main news" section just a small card in the middle of the others? If it contains news that are considered important, then they should be highlighted somehow.

It seems to me that this design was chosen to allow for an easy "infinite scrolling" page, where more news are loaded as you scroll down. However, if the objective was to provide users with a quick way to keep up on topics, perhaps this "infinite scrolling" aspect was not needed at all; the page could just summarize the most important content and display it to the user.

There are some positive aspects of this page: there is a quick access to web search results (thanks to the search bar) and to your most visited websites, and the content you see can be personalized based on topics of your liking. You can even hide some of the cards if you don't want to see them anymore (for example, it is possible to hide the "Recommended Videos" or the "Shopping" cards), which can help reduce the clutter, but not enough to make it a good design. The page probably needs an overhaul to make it more visually appealing and practical – perhaps a good start would be displaying the main news on top, followed by important information like weather or traffic, and only after that display the remaining news, organized by topics, and with a consistent design for the cards.