

SYNCTIME



Team 2: Divya Dinakar, Melissa Bartel, Rashmee Gade, and Rutvi Karnik

Application Overview

- Application we chose: Google Calendar
- Widely used scheduling application that helps users organize events, reminders, and tasks
- Allows people to manage personal schedules, coordinate with others, and stay on top of daily responsibilities
- Service it offers: event scheduling, reminders, time management, and shared calendars

Why We Chose Google Calendar

- Google Calendar has a huge global user base, from students to working professionals
- Key tool in daily productivity and coordination, especially for group work and social planning
- Despite popularity, users still struggle with one major task: finding a time that works for everyone
- Its relevance, widespread adoption, and simplicity make it an ideal app to improve through a new feature

The Problem

- Users often struggle to coordinate group availability for meetings, study sessions, and hangouts
- This leads to:
 - Time wasted messaging back and forth with people
 - Frustration and confusion over who is free and when
 - Inefficient planning, especially for larger groups
- The main issue is that Google Calendar lacks an easy, built in way to compare availability across people

Feature-Social Availability (SyncTime)

- What it does:
 - Allows users to share their free/busy times with selected people that they choose
 - Automatically identifies overlapping time slots for everyone included
 - Suggests the best possible meeting times instantly, without the back and forth
- How it solves the problem:
 - Gets rid of manual communication
 - Simplifies group scheduling
 - Makes Google Calendar more efficient, social, and user-friendly

Research Process

- **Research Method:** Google Forms Survey
 - We chose this method because it is an efficient way to gather statistical data on user habits, feature usage, and satisfaction, as well as qualitative insights into user frustrations.
- **Survey Format:** 11 questions across two sections, consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions:
 - Section 1: User Habits - focused on demographics, user habits, primary communication tools, and daily obligations..
 - Section 2: Google Calendar Specifics - focused on usage frequency, feature familiarity, satisfaction, and usage/difficulty of the existing Guest Permission features.
- **Goal:** To understand how people coordinate availability and identify the gaps in Google Calendar group scheduling features.

Key Questions & Responses

- Total Responses: 47
- Primary Demographic: 18-22 years old → *matches our target user group*
- 93.6% have daily obligations (school, work, etc.) → *users need efficient scheduling*
- 97.9% rely on messaging apps to coordinate availability. → *Google Calendar isn't being used for group scheduling*
- 66% state that they do not use the Guest Permissions features. → *current features are confusing, hidden, or unused*
- 68.1% rated Google Calendar 4/5 out of 5. → *users like the app overall; the problem is not within the core product, rather it is a specific missing feature*

How Our Research Shaped Our Solution

Defining Data Point	Analysis	Solution Justification
<u>97.9%</u> use messaging apps to coordinate availability.	Users rely on external communication tools instead of Google Calendar for group planning.	Add a feature that automatically finds overlapping availability so scheduling stays within Google Calendar.
<u>66%</u> do not use Guest Permissions.	Existing group scheduling features are too complex, confusing, or hidden.	Build a simple, intuitive, and accessible feature; should only require one click.
Short Answer Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “scheduling takes time”• “too many options”• “overwhelming”	Users want scheduling to be fast and easy, not unorganized and time-consuming.	Reinforces the need for a clean, streamlined tool focused only on comparing availability.

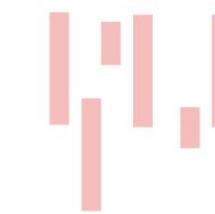
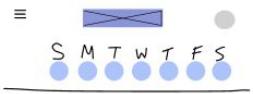
User Persona - Jennifer McDonald

- **Who She Is:** A 20-year-old Rutgers student who constantly juggles classes, clubs, and friends with different schedules. She uses Google Calendar for school but relies on texting to plan hangouts.
- **The Problem (In Her Words):** *"If Google Calendar could just tell me when my friends are free, life would be perfect."*
- **Key Pain Points (Supported by Research):**
 - No easy way to sync free time socially
 - Aligns with 97.9% using Messages for coordination
 - Overwhelmed comparing multiple calendars
 - Aligns with 66% not using current Guest Permissions features
 - Group plans fall apart due to miscommunication
 - Aligns with the 'Frustration and confusion' part of our problem statement
- **Her Goal (Our Solution):** To easily see when her friends are free and spend less time coordinating. Our solution directly provides this by automatically identifying overlapping time slots!



Lo-fi's

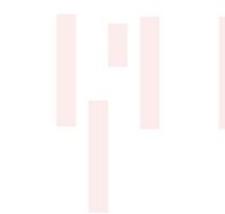
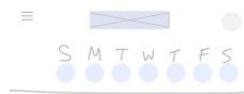
Home Screen Lo-fi



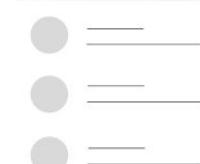
"SyncTime"



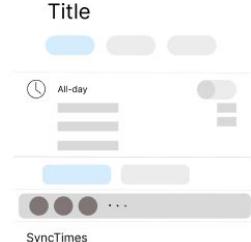
Click on SyncTime



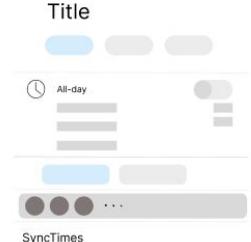
Create a SyncTime...



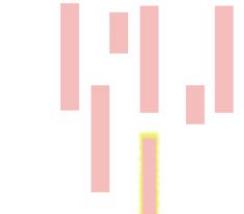
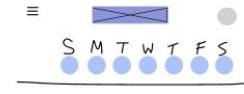
Loading SyncTime ...



Select a SyncTime...



Home Screen (SyncTime)



"SyncTime"



Hi-fi's

Home Screen

Synctime

Create a SyncTime...

Add Amanda

Add Jake

Add Michael

Look up SyncTimes

Select SyncTime

Final Screen

The application interface includes a top navigation bar with icons for search, calendar, and user profile. The main calendar view shows a grid of hours from 5 AM to 11 PM. Red boxes indicate existing scheduled events. A blue box highlights a specific event on November 18 at 12 PM. The 'SyncTime' feature allows users to find available times for multiple contacts and add them to the calendar.

Prototype



DESIGN CHALLENGES

01

Our first design challenge was when we were drawing our lo-fi wireframes. We had not thought out exactly how our feature was going to work, and it was showing as we struggled to even put together a lo-fi design.

Solution: We decided to set aside the lo-fi's and spend some time detailing the inner workings of our feature. (Ex: what options would our feature afford the user? - Preview, reset, modify availability, how availability would be shared/synced, etc). After this planning, we were able to finish our lo-fi's.

02

As we moved on to the hi-fi's, we found that we had made our feature *too* complex. Google Calendar's theme is minimalist, with easy to use features that are supposed to boost productivity and usability, not hinder it.

Solution: As a result, we decided to get rid of options that were redundant (Ex: Preview, Reset). Instead of having modify availability as a separate option, we just made it customizable within the "SyncTime" event itself, much like when creating a regular event.

Reflection

- We learned a lot about how to conduct user research. It quickly became clear that we would need to be specific with our questions that addressed the pain points of our chosen application. We also learned that the wording of our questions matter in order to eliminate bias
- As a team, we realized the importance of communication. Keeping each other updated and communicating clearly and effectively helped us make better decisions as a team. Even though we divided up our tasks sometimes, we were all involved throughout the process, giving feedback to each other / asking for clarification.
- **Skills we want to build:** Effective research skills, usability testing, and visual design
- With more time, we would work on making our feature *more* customizable, as that came up often within our user research. We would fine-tune our feature, maybe add a “reminder” to users about the upcoming SyncTime, another thing mentioned in our survey. We believe we came up with a great product that can be of use to many people, but it has more potential we would explore if we had more time!

Thank You!