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Engineering Methods For Software Usability

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Assignment 2

**Twitter For iPad 5.0 Takes One Step Forward, Three Steps Back**

The Twitter app for the iPad went through a large update so it would better match the Twitter main site as well as the iPhone and Android apps. The main purpose of this major user interface re-design was to update the current iPad app to the massive changes that had been done to the Twitter main site while keeping all the aspects of the current UI that had been widely praised. One the biggest changes to the Twitter main site was to make it more mobile friendly and so that it would be easier to make all the mobile apps and the main site look similar.

The iPhone and Android apps both were updated to the new redesign soon after it happened. The iPad kept its old design for awhile before it was switched as well. The new user interface would have a lot to live up to because the old one was so highly praised. Since the iPad has significantly more screen space then its mobile counterparts, there is a lot more that can be done to take advantage of this. The old design did this very well. The timeline went down the middle and when you tapped a tweet, the timeline would shift to the left while the tweet would enlarge and move to the right. In the new design this no longer happens. Tapping on a tweet makes the tweet open in a new window. This also means that the timeline view has a significant amount of unused white space. Another big change was the moving of all the account options. They used to be located on the navigation bar but have now been moved to harder to find places on the profile view.

The new design did improve on some things, however. The conversation view has because much more fluid. Also all photos can now be viewed in a full-screen mode with just a single tap. The profile view has also been greatly improved by the re-organization to make the more important things like recent images and tweets more prominent than before.

The advantages of the new technology are mostly in the ease of remembrance and making note of the users’ short term memory category. Since all the mobile apps as well as the main site are all consistent, one does not need to re-learn how to use the technology when switching from device to device. Also important things on the profile page are more prominent, like recent tweets and pictures. This way the user has to do minimal searching for these most used features.

Disadvantages of the new UI redesign fall into the ease of use category. There was also a significant lack of taking advantage of the iPad’s increased screen real estate. Moving settings out of the navigation bar causes two main problems. One is that it makes them harder to find then before. The other is the fact that old users who are used to the old locations would be taken off guard by the new change. Making tweets open a new window instead sliding to the right misses an opportunity to use the extra space on an iPad.

I believe that the new design takes away more of the old great features than adding new great features. In my opinion the article, titled Twitter For iPad 5.0 Takes One Step Forward, Three Steps Back, by Nathan Ingraham of The Verge, was a little too one-sided. It could have benefited from going into more depth about the improvements of the new design and less about the failures.

<http://www.theverge.com/2012/9/19/3354620/twitter-ipad-app-hands-on>