

# Native app studio week 3 opdracht 3

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## Introduction to the Internet

With respect to other popular activities in life the internet is one of the fastest growing occupations with respect to the usage per day, and the number of people worldwide using the internet. Because the internet is growing so fast popular websites are most of the time not older than 10 years. Successful companies such as Facebook could profit of the growth of the internet and in this way reach enormous size. However because the internet is so fast paced, and the technology which enables it is continually changing the lifespan of the average succesful website is also fairly short. Some companies just can't keep up with the new trends and developments, it gets competition of young ambitious companies which offer the same service or product but better. This results in dwindling visitornumbers and the website dies out.

One of the biggest developments with regard to the internet was the availability of mobile phones with internet access. Suddenly websites also had to work and look good for small websites. Because this was such a difficult task and the a website could not use a smartphone to the fullest, companies started making applications specifcly for smartphones and tablets. One of the most succesful companies which was able to adapt and keep up with the trends and developments of the internet is Facebook. This lead as the motivation to an evaluation of the mobile application of Facebook.

## Introduction to Facebook

Before we dive deeper into the design decisions of Facebook, it is good to first evaluate their starting point. Starting as a small project designed in a dorm of Harvard, Facebooks' goal was to offer a social network to check every student of your university online, and see whether your crush had a boyfriend or not. However Facebook quickly spread to neighbouring universities and later also became available for everyone. Nowadays Facebook has more than a billion active users and is the biggest social network on the internet. With over 8000 employees the company tries to deliver the best possible user experience for their website and apps. In this essay we will evaluate the mobile Facebook

application, and in specific the Android version, on the basis of concepts of the book Cadence Slang.

## Completeness

One of the first and most important concepts which applies to every mobile application is completeness. An app can be considered complete if it has enough functionality to do fundamental tasks, and is thus useful for the user.

Completeness is the first concept which we will consider in this evaluation, because users do not have to use the mobile application. If it is not complete, and thus does not have the most fundamental functionality to complete the desired tasks, the user can wait until it has a computer available and use the normal website. Furthermore is the website of almost all big internet companies responsive, and also offers the basic functionality.

To determine if this app is complete, we must first determine the most fundamental functionality. What are the most basic tasks one must be able to do with this application? Some of these are listed below:

1. Login with your account
2. Post a new message on your homepage
3. Read your Facebook wall with all the updates of your Facebook friends
4. Interact with Facebook posts on your wall or homepage, this could be commenting or liking a post.

Ofcourse this list varies per person, some people would want more possibilities such as sending private messages, joining groups, share posts etc. However we can conclude that these functionalities are part of the basic functionality of Facebook. If one of these functions were to be omitted, most likely the app would be barely used.

All these functions are included in the Facebook app however, and thus we can conclude that it is complete.

## Simplicity

The danger in trying to add functionality to your application to make it complete, is that your app Will not be simple anymore. Simplicity means that your app gives you the impression that it is simple to use. Unnecessary functions are confusing and should be removed.

Another danger for loosing the simplicity in your function is when the app is a Feature Creep. This mostly happens when shareholders argue over functionality, and the consensus is reached by implementing all of the functions, even

though most of them are unnecessary.

Analyzing the Facebook app for simplicity is done by considering a number of concepts:

1. Feature Creep - Are there many unnecessary features?
2. Is the navigation prominent and simple
3. Are unnecessary elements removed, still keeping the functionality?

As an example for these questions we are going to consider the Facebook Wall page. One of the most eye catching features are the three layers with possibilities and functions before we reach the wall itself with posts of Facebook friends. Even though the main navigation is simple to find between these three blocks, the usage is less. All three layers are filled with ambiguous icons which do not state the functionality clearly of that button. This page does not look inviting to use because of its simplicity for a first time user. For instance the top bar contains a full width search bar and a menu/person icon. This bar could have been omitted. Instead of a full size search bar a simple search icon could have been added to the second bar. This would keep functionality and simplicity. Furthermore would this provide more space for the other ambiguous buttons and functions to be more clearly explained.

We can thus conclude that although this application has a great number of functions, it does not entirely succeed in giving a simple impression.

## Color Palette

Ever since the foundation of Facebook the color palette has changed very little. The main color blue has been associated with trust, honesty and communication, this fits perfectly for Facebook. The colorpalette of Facebook consists of 5 main colors:

1. Dark blue - used in the main navigation, full width bars and static icons. For instance the current page icon is dark blue.
2. Light blue - A more inviting lighter color blue used for elements with which can be interacted. For instance important information or buttons.
3. White - A neutral background color.
4. Grey - A neutral color for buttons which can be clicked, text, titles etcetra. These icons are however mainly on static places making them easier to spot.
5. Black - Mainly used for non-clickable text

By only using the color blue which also is in the brand for important or clickable elements, users make an automatic association for important information with the color blue, which is favorable for the brand Facebook itself. Furthermore in first instance using grey as color for clickable icons on the homepage seems illogical, however this is needed because otherwise the amount of blue in the app becomes too much and the 'eye-catching' effect for important information or buttons becomes too weak. Furthermore is the color grey only used for clickable text which is static such as the main navigation bar.

## Conclusion

Based on the evaluations of the fundamental concepts described above, we can draw some interesting conclusions. One of the first conclusions is that this app is complete, but far from simple. First time users which are not too familiar with the website will need some time to get used to the functionality and dynamics of this application. However a seasoned Facebook user which regularly posts new updates or scrolls around the website will need considerable less time to adapt, as all the icons, colors and functions are more or less the same. Capitalizing on this insight we can furthermore conclude that this application is not meant as a smaller mobile version of Facebook, but instead offers the same functionality. Because there is less space to implement all the functionality some simplicity is lost. This also means a small inexperienced target audience is lost as the application is supportive and inviting to new users.