An investigation into the user experience of modern web messaging platforms

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Conclusions

- Initial aim of developing a web based chat application was a success, however, not all requirements were met due to complexity of the React framework and time constraints.
- Contextual inquiry showcased certain elements of the design were successful, including the sign in process and core functionality of the application, however, there were some issues with the design that could be improved on.

Introduction

Good user experience design is extremely important when developing a successful website - In this project, a web based chat application was designed and developed with UX practices in mind and the usability was tested via contextual inquiry on 5 participants.

Aims & Objectives

Aim

Develop a fully functional web based chat application and conduct a usability test to validate the usability of the website's design.

Ojectives

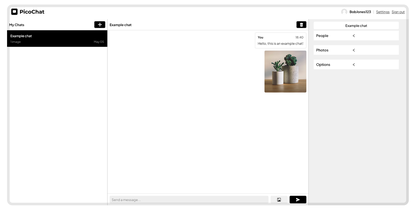
- Research modern UX theories and practices.
- Design a prototype using Figma
- Develop web chat application using React & Node
- Conduct a contextual inquiry on the final design

Design & Implementation

Before designing the prototype, a list of design requirements were developed using a storyboard of user stories. Once requirements were gathered, a prototype design based on UX research was developed implementing these requirements. Once the prototype was finished, the final design was developed using React and node.js via the chat-engine API and included the ability to create group chats and send both text and image based messages to multiple users.



Prototype design



Final design

React

node

Testing & Results

A contextual inquiry is a method of usability testing in which the subject is observed and occasionally interviewed whilst using the product, rather than after using the product. A contextual inquiry was conducted on 5 different candidates and results showcased different elements of success and areas of improvement needed for the design. Users were able to create group chats, send and recieve both text based messages and images, manage group chat memebers. However, there were some issues with the usability of the application. For example: some candidates struggled to differentiate between the sign up and log in form.

Future work

Recommendations for future work include furthering the scope of the project to ensure all design requirements such as read reciepts and profile picture uploads work. Other future work includes redesigning the application based on the feedback issued in the contextual inquiry.