RoomEase User Testing Document

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Background

RoomEase user testing was conducted using the Feature Complete Release of the application. The three users that tested the application were Keith Simmons, Garreck Lenz, and Andrew Leever. Keith is a third year math undergraduate at UW, who is well versed in technology. Garreck and Andrew are both third year biology students who use their smartphones regularly, but aren't extremely tech savvy.

Procedure

User testing was conducted with the 3 users interacting in a group setting, since the application is meant to serve as a group-based platform. We instructed the users to not share insights they learn about the app (how to navigate the UI, specifically) with one another, so that they could each have a fresh look at each module. However, we started by giving them a few tasks to force them to interact with the various modules, then gave them the remaining time (for a total of 1 hour) to play around with whatever functionality they wanted. We instructed them to do the following tasks:

> **One user should set up a group, and the other two should join that group.**
> **Each of you should add at least 1 shared item to the fridge.**
> **Each of you should schedule a reservation for some time tomorrow.**
> **Each of you should create a list and add something to another user's list.**

We gave the above instructions as a list of instructions in writing, and then let the users interact with the application. We asked the following questions after the time was up:

> **Did you experience any confusion when using the application? If so, what confused you?**
> **Did anything frustrate you about the application?**
> **Was there something you wanted to do in the app that you couldn't?**
> **How would you describe the user interface?**
> **How would you describe navigating through the application?**

Results

During Testing

During testing, the users had a fairly easy time completing the actions that were asked of them. We encouraged them to talk out loud about their actions, and received some good suggestions and ideas as a result. There were a few things that were unclear, namely the hold-and-press style of interacting with the items in each module was not as intuitive as we thought, all 3 of them instead attempted to simply tap on the items. Other than that, they had an easy time navigating the UI. They had a few complaints about styling, namely that the Facebook logout button wasn't perfectly centered. Also, they weren't always sure that their button presses had been registered in popup menus (there was sometimes a short delay before the loading icon popped up).

Questions After Testing

Did you experience any confusion when using the application? If so, what confused you?
Keith, who set up the group for the others to join, had a hard time finding the group login information initially (didn't think to go straight to the account page). Also, all 3 of them didn't find longpress intuitive, and attempted to first tap the items to interact with them.

Did anything frustrate you about the application?
For the most part, they felt that the UI was simple to use and the application was responsive. However, Garreck mentioned that at times he wasn't sure if his click on the "done" button of popups was registered right away.

Was there something you wanted to do in the app that you couldn't?
Keith mentioned that he wanted to be able to look at statistics of how long each item had been reserved by each group member. He wished there was a bit more data available so that he could look at his group's history. Andrew and Garreck reported that they were pleased with the current set of features.

How would you describe the user interface?
Keith described the user interface as "clean, the different sections of the app look nice and fit nicely together." Andrew mentioned that it looked very professional and polished, and liked the color scheme.

How would you describe navigating through the application?
Aside from the initial issue of not knowing to go to the account page for group login credentials, none of them reported any problems. They said the slide out menu was easy and intuitive. They also enjoyed the quick add buttons on the feed page, they said it felt easy to get to the right page quickly.

Insights

About our App
We found that some aspects of our user interface were confusing and that in certain places it is not necessarily intuitive for the user as to what they can do. It's not entirely clear that the user can press and hold items, since there is no visual indication of their press, and tapping is a more natural way to interact with an element on a touchscreen.

About user Testing
It is very important to start user testing at a point earlier on in the development of the application. We could have benefited from doing user testing closer to the release of our beta in order to give us helpful feedback that we could have acted on sooner than coming to certain realizations about the UI being less intuitive in some places than we had hoped. Even though we are users of the application ourselves and we are part of the target market, there is still a lot that user testing has to offer and there were some issues that came up in user testing that we didn't run into because we built the app, know how it works and know what we can do whereas the average user and non-CS major doesn't find intuitive.

Changes

We were able to make a few quick UI tweaks to fix up all of the major complaints that the users had about the application. We changed the longpress listeners on our items to be click listeners, so that users will be able to simply tap items to interact with them, which is what all of users attempted to do at first. Additionally, we added a message to the group creation screen that lets users know they can find their group login credentials at the "account" page of the application. Finally, we forced the loading icon to be displayed sooner in the process of handling popups that re-render the page, so the user is given immediate feedback that the app is processing something and their click is received. The loading icon was also changed from a bar at the bottom of the screen to a spinning circle to in the middle of the screen to provide better feedback.

Unfortunately, we do not have the resources or time available to address the desire that Keith had to see more data about his group in the application, but it gives us a good idea about features that we could potentially add in the future.