Software Development: The “Strike” Application as a Critique of Social Media

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Introduction

- Goals of the Strike application
  - Build a small network of connections
  - Encourage maintained daily interaction between users
  - Gain in-game currency
  - Build and maintain streaks

- Address some of the negative impacts of social media usage

- Foster out-of-game communication between users

- Designed to be
  - Competitive and fun
  - Allow users to learn who they want to care about
Introduction Cont.

- What are the issues with social media?
  - Social media applications allow for unhealthy use
    - Comparing one’s life to others
    - Singular form of validation
    - Curating online appearance
    - Aimless use
    - Alternative to in-person interactions

- What are the design goals?
  - Minimize clutter
  - Separate content clearly
  - Offer limited options
Streaks page where users can start new streaks with their friends, accept/reject streak request, and view details about their current streaks.
Friends page where users can search for and add new friends, accept/ignore friend requests, and view their friends game stats.
**Left:** Unlocks page where users can view what Emojis they have unlocked and their current progress towards unlocking more. **Right:** Profile and Login pages where users can see their own game stats and log out of the app, and login and sign up for a new account.
Sociology of Current Social Media Usage

- Different engagement styles results in varying experiences
  - “Social media may help improve mental health by boosting self-esteem and providing a source of emotional support” (Jacewicz).
  - “The spread and ubiquitous presence of envy on SNSs (Social Networking Sites) has been shown to undermine users’ life satisfaction” (Krasnova).

- “Self-presentation”
  - Curating one’s appearance
  - Appreciated for the online version of one’s self

- Constant stream of content coming from every direction
  - Social comparison
  - Fear of missing out
Issues with Social Media Usage

● Lack of Intimacy
  ○ Intended to allow people to share content to be interacted and engaged with
  ○ People mindlessly use social media platforms
    ■ No constraints or goals
  ○ Disconnect between purpose and use
    ■ Created a hole people have fallen into

● Large Networks of “Friends”
  ○ More connections means less content from each “friend”
  ○ Building large following
    ■ How do I attract more attention?
    ■ Less personal, more widely appreciated content
  ○ Replacing in-person interaction
    ■ Viewing content steals excitement of genuine contact
Application Goals

● Encourage outside-of-game communication between users
  ○ Not a communication platform

● Allow participants to have fun while learning who they want to care about
  ○ A tool in the form of a game

● Smaller Stronger Networks
  ○ Fewer connections means each one is more valuable and easier to focus on

● Maintained Contact
  ○ Intentional daily contact
  ○ Active decision making
    ■ Aimless scrolling
    ■ Inconsequential liking
Application Description

- Streaks
  - Daily connection between two users
  - Currency value of each interaction

- Currency
  - In-game point based reward system
  - Limit growth of network
  - Value on each interaction
    - stoking streak
    - streak termination
    - daily allowance

- Network
  - “Do I want to think about this person every day?”
Design Goals

● Simple Logical Flow

● Familiar feeling to other popular apps
  ○ Universally understood icons

● Minimizing distractions
  ○ Reduced color and styling
  ○ Large headings and ample use of white space

● Prioritizing user needs and functionality
Conclusion

● Strike addresses a few issues with social media

● Knowing that flaws exist does not protect you from them
  ○ Pressure to present and curate
  ○ Valuing followers and likes
  ○ Replacing the genuine excitement of in-person interactions

● Next time you use social media consider asking yourself:
  ○ What are the characteristics of the appearance of the app?
  ○ How do those visual choices change how the app feels and functions?
  ○ Does this app have holes in its goals that allow you to get sucked in or does it have clear limitations?

● Get the most out of what is offered
  ○ Intentional design
  ○ Intentional usage
Presentation: https://bit.ly/2woMijG


Code: https://bit.ly/2K3oFz2