

Introduction

Title: Foundational and design research of an app for organizing text messages.

Author: Amedeo

Stakeholders: Amedeo, anyone who uses Apple Messages or other messaging apps, potential investors, and potential developers.

Date and schedule: Days and times as volunteer participants are available.

Project background: I'm creating an app to help people organize their text messages sent in Apple Messages because I and friends have struggled with this. There is a lot of social and intellectual value in text messages that simply goes missing once they get buried in the latest message updates. Before proceeding, I want to understand if this is a problem for people, how they experience the problem, and how intense of a problem it is. I'm trying to establish: Is there enough desire for this to justify building it? The research will also go into design elements, as I will aim to understand the nature of the problems people experience when they try to organize their text messages. Through those answers, I hope to develop an MVP that solves those problems.

Research Goal

Figure out if organizing texts is a problem, how intensive it is, what sort of barriers (or absences of app features) cause these problems, and how well early designs of my app solve those problems.

Research Questions

1. How often do people struggle to organize their text messages, find old text messages, or create reminders based on text messages?
2. What do people want to do with messages they want to save for some other purpose? Reminisce? Remind them of appointments?

3. What tools do people use to do what they want with text messages they want to save? Do they take screenshots and file those? Do they rely on existing search and meta-organizational features from Apple Messages?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing tools that help people organize text messages, automatically or manually?
5. Does Cat Herder solve these problems both in the two task streams: *organizing* a text and then *re-finding* (and re-using) a text?

KPIs

- **System Usability Scale (SUS):** I'm aiming to get general impressions as to how useful early prototypes seem to users.

Methodology

- **Type:** Unmoderated usability study using userbrain.com. This exercise document includes elements that would be relevant, however, to a moderated usability study, rather than unmoderated one, which I ended up moving forward with.
- **Location:** Remote and online.
- **Dates:** Depends on availability of remote volunteer participants.
- **Who:** Five participants will walk through a prototype of my Cat Herder app to see how well it helps them organize texts, or if they find it interesting at all. They will also answer questions about their text messaging activity levels.
- **Duration and structure:** Each session will last 15 to 20 minutes, and include an introduction, a list of short questions, and a testing period.

Participants

I'm reaching out to friends and family members, with an eye toward creating a group with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and demographics.

The **primary characteristics** are: they use Apple Messages or other messaging app; they use the app at least once per day.

The **screening survey** will ask if they use a text messaging app and how often they use it.

The **incentive** will be an offer to buy them a coffee.

In terms of **diversity**, I have males and females of different various backgrounds in the age ranges of 20 to 75.

Script/Discussion Guide

Intro:

Welcome. Thanks for helping me with this project.

Are you okay with me doing video and audio recordings of this session?

First of all, this isn't a test—there is no right answer, and no answers are considered wrong.

If you have questions at any point in the session, please ask.

The information I'm collecting today will help me build and refine an app for organizing text messages.

Basic questions

How many times per day do you use text messaging?

What type of information do you text about? Professional or personal or both?

How often do you try to find old texts?

Why do you want to find old texts? What do you use them for?

How do you organize or use information in text messages in apps other than your text messaging app? For example, do you save screenshots or copy and paste texts into a note-taking app?

Into the testing

Prompt 1: Starting with the text screen in Apple Messages, please send the selected collection of texts into the app to get a feel for how to organize them.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 2: Add organizational tags to saved messages.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 3: Explore and scan saved texts every way you think you can.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 4: Edit a saved text, adjusting its tags or other content, and confirm changes.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 5: Fav or unfav a saved text.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 6: Set and remove a reminder on a saved text.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 7: Add or edit notes about a saved text.

What did you think of this process?

Prompt 8: How did you feel about the app experience overall? What did you like or dislike about it? Would you use it? Would you recommend it to friends?

Conclusion

Thanks so much for doing this research with me. It will help me build a useful and fun app for organizing text messages. When can I treat you to a coffee?