

# Designing a Better User Experience for Instagram

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**Abstract** - Social media, today forms a prominent part of the vis-à-vis culture of socially developed human beings and in this time forms the backbone of human communication. An application like Instagram satisfies to some extent, the user's needs of Social Interaction, Documentation, Diversion, Self-Promotion, Creativity [1].

**Key Words:** Social Media, User interaction, User interface design, User experience, Colour theory

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Instagram was launched in 2010 as a mobile photo and video-sharing application. The app gained popularity quickly due to its enhanced photo-editing features allowing users to take, edit, and upload the photos instantly, and with high quality [2]. But there are several UI/UX elements of the application that still have room for improvement. In this paper we have identified three of these, through a survey and presented better alternatives, along with our reasoning.

## 2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Our survey consisted of six multiple choice questions:

1. How frequently do you post on Instagram?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Whenever I feel like it

2. Would your experience be improved if Instagram's posts or stories could be made from a single place?

- Yes
- No



Fig -1: Posts and stories (Proposed System)

3. Instead of tapping and holding to view the details of a post, would you prefer to have it appear in a pop up?

- Yes
- No



Fig -2: Indefinite time pop-up

4. Should Instagram have more gesture-based navigation?

- Yes
- No

5. Are you comfortable with the current dark mode color scheme of Instagram?

- Yes
- No



Fig -3: Current Dark Mode of Instagram

6. Which Instagram experience feels more pleasing?

- Left
- Right
- None



Fig -4: An alternative background color

### 3. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RESPONSES

The survey had 158 participants, with 94.3% responses coming from people in the age group of 18 to 24 years, the

main target audience of Instagram [3]. The locations of these responses are concentrated for individuals living in Thane and Navi Mumbai both situated in Maharashtra, India. The responses were 63.9% Males, 36.1% Females and 0.0% of people identifying as other genders.

### 4. RESPONSES

1. How frequently do you post on Instagram?

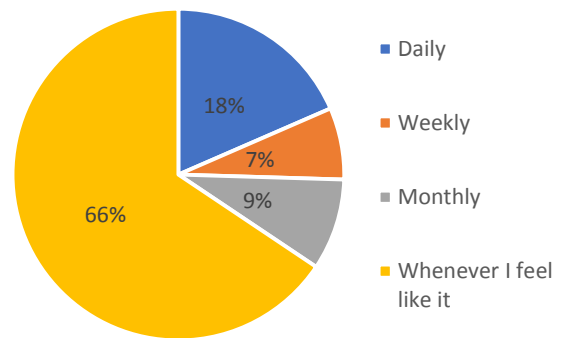


Fig -5: Frequency of Instagram use

2. Would your experience be improved if Instagram's posts or stories could be made from a single place?

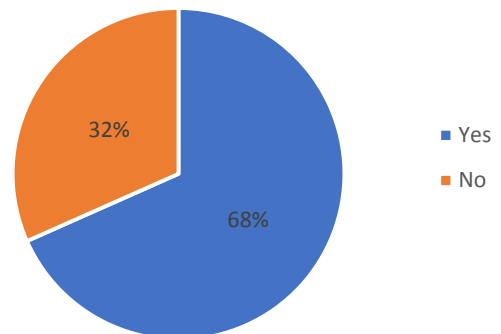


Fig -6: Preference for post and story feature location

3. Instead of tapping and holding to view the details of a post, would you prefer to have it appear in a pop up?

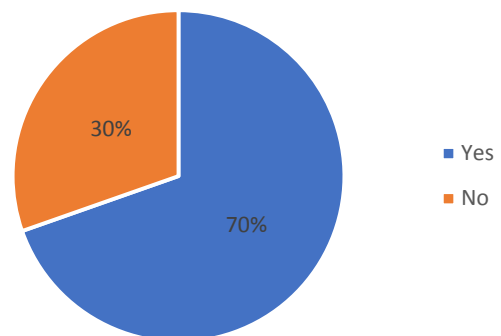


Fig -7: Preference for tap & hold vs pop-up

4. Should Instagram have more gesture-based navigation?

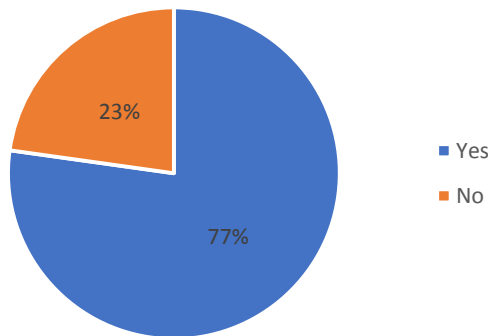


Fig -8: Preference for gesture-based navigation

5. Are you comfortable with the current dark mode color scheme of Instagram?

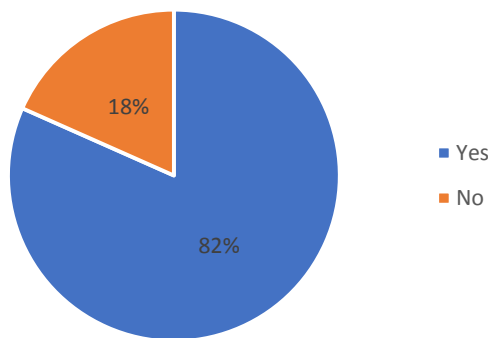


Fig -9: Sentiments about current dark mode

6. Which Instagram experience feels more pleasing?

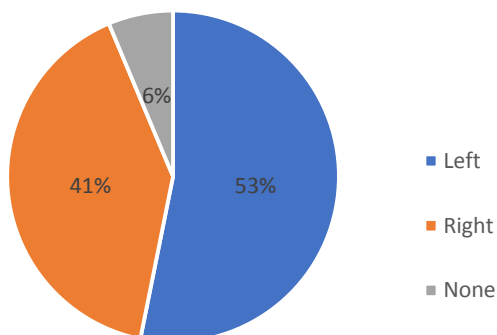


Fig -10: Color preference for dark mode

## 5. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We identified three issues that the current Instagram application has through this survey and exploring the Material Design recommendations provided by Google. These are namely:

### 5.1 SINGLE LOCATION CAMERA OPERATION

Currently, Instagram’s posts and stories cannot be made from the same place though they’re extremely

similar features, visually and functionally. A majority of users in our survey, as seen in Fig -6, suggested that they would prefer being able to upload posts and stories from a single place. This is corroborated by multiple design principles. The Gestalt Principles of Design [4] are critical for all designs, out of which the current Instagram application doesn’t follow two critical ones, that of proximity and similarity, in the context of how stories and posts are made. The two features are connected via their core purpose of making use of the camera, yet, they’re in two completely different locations, and have different designs. This artefact also violates the forgiveness and affordance principles of design, where design should help people avoid errors and minimize the negative consequences of the user’s error when they occur [5].

### 5.2 INDEFINITE TIME POP UP

In the search menu of Instagram, the users have to tap and hold to have a post pop up which disappears when the user lifts their finger. They also have to drag their finger through the post to the poster’s username to open their profile. The survey suggests, as seen in Fig -7, that most users would prefer an indefinite pop up for a post instead of tapping and holding. This arrangement also requires the user to put in a lot more effort to reach the poster’s profile. Though there are multiple ways that users navigate, like omniscience, optimal rationality, satisficing, mental maps, rote memorization, information foraging, information costs [6] one of the core principles the designer needs to keep in mind while designing applications is to minimize user effort [7].

### 5.3 USING SNACKBARS INSTEAD OF TOASTS

The android version of Instagram currently uses toasts to indicate the user about errors and alerts. The official android documentation states that “The Snackbar class supersedes Toast. While Toast is currently still supported, Snackbar is now the preferred way to display brief, transient messages to the user.” [8] Snackbars have a lot of inherent advantages over toasts, two important ones being that they can have an action attached to them and second that they can be displayed in the context of the UI where the action occurred [9].

## 6. CONCLUSION

Instagram is a ubiquitous application yet; its design was not initially planned with all these additional features in mind. Thus, it contains a lot of artifacts which, lead to a less pleasing user experience than what can be accomplished. By incorporating the suggested changes, the interaction of the user with application can be made more gratifying.

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