

Express Mail

 *welcome to
express mail*

3:30 PM NOV. 18. 2003

EASY NEWS
Virus Warning
New Feature
Today's Feature

COMMENTS?

USER NAME

PASSWORD

LOGIN>

■ FORGET YOUR PASSWORD?

■ START A NEW ACCOUNT!

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SI 682

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Executive Summary

ExpressMail

ExpressMail is a web-based alternative for e-mail needs. It features an intuitive interface and ease of use that transcends competing e-mail providers. Users who are new to electronic communications will race through the learning curve and quickly find themselves proficient in e-mail use.

ExpressMail features the RealText help system, aiding the learning of ExpressMail's features by addressing the user in plain language and revealing options. The use of categories for filing messages puts the power in users' hands to break out of rigid barriers. ExpressMail recognizes that a message may belong in any number of categories, and with ExpressMail, one can use the categories system to find messages more easily.

ExpressMail further aids learning through a clean interface, large and prominent buttons, and the avoidance of pop-up windows. Ease of use is further aided through navigation through frames, rather than the complete reloading of the screen.

Competition

ExpressMail is entering a crowded market. Web-based e-mail is widespread and free, and basic e-mail software also comes bundled with the Windows Operation System (Outlook Express). Generally, these services work well, but no major player focuses on the e-mail novice. We do.

The Future

It is important to note that our system is unlikely to beat competing systems on efficiency. Streamlined functionality comes at the cost of clear steps and explanation, and vice-versa. It may be possible to improve performance while maintaining ease of use. It may be difficult to keep users once they become experienced, however, unless they develop brand loyalty.

The Work Plan

The work of the project was divided among the three members of the team according to their strengths.

- Iris Liu was primarily responsible for the graphic elements of the project, including roughs, sketches, and mock-ups.
- Michael Beasley focused on the assembly of this report and on task analyses.
- Jennifer Angel focused on the assembly of the report, on task analyses, and on scheduling and planning.

Deliverable	Due Date	Time Taken (hours)
Target Audience	9/24/2003	2
Target Platform	9/24/2003	1
Personas	10/2/2003	2+
Business Goals	10/2/2003	2
User Goals	10/2/2003	2
Usability Objectives	10/2/2003	2
Competitive Analysis	10/3/2003	3

Deliverable	Due Date	Time Taken (hours)
Requirements Specs	10/3/2003	3
Planning Schedule	10/3/2003	3
Mockups	10/16/2003	4+
Screen Roughs	10/16/2003	4+
Thumbnails	10/16/2003	4+
Task Analysis	10/30/2003	3
IA, Content Inventory	10/30/2003	6
Final Screen Layout	11/13/2003	4
Product Style Guide	11/13/2003	4
Storyboard	11/13/2003	4
Title Page	12/4/2003	1
Table of Contents	12/4/2003	1
Executive Summary	12/4/2003	1

We met on a weekly basis for half an hour to an hour to brief each other on our progress. Our work was done in a distributed manner, with e-mail and Worktools as our primary means of collaboration.

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Angel, Beasley, and Liu

Business Goals

- Find our niche in the market by establishing a reputation for intuitive, easy-to-use, and user friendly interfaces.
- Create a large user base through free services
- Provide premium services for subscribing customers
- Make a profit after use has become pervasive.

User Goals

- Effectively archive messages for easy retrieval
- Quickly become proficient with e-mail use
- Send and receive e-mail
- Express oneself through effective control of composition
- Reduced waiting times through efficient use of frames

Usability Objectives

- Keep GOMS measurements for common applications at median or below the standards of competitors
- Ensure that errors occur less than 10% of the time
- Learning time is 30% less than competitors

Target Platform

- MS Windows 98 or later
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 or later
- Screen resolution of 800 x 600

Target Audience

- Users with limited email experience
- Users with bad email experiences
- English speakers with few accessibility issues

Personas

1. KATE

Name: Kate
Gender: Female
Age: 12
Education: Middle school
Computer experience: Very basic word processing, games, no web surfing
Computer owned: Parents own a PC (Windows XP) and a laptop (Windows XP)
Screen Size: 1024x768
Hobbies: Soccer, swimming, reading, playing
Country/Language: USA/English
Disability: None.

Usage Situation:

- Kate comes from a computer-literate household and is learning about them in school.
- She currently does not use e-mail, but thinks it would be nice to write to her grandparents and to some of her friends from school.
- Kate needs e-mail software that will be easy to use, because she's not interested in reading too much or taking a lot of time practicing with a piece of software.

2. ALFRED

Name: Alfred
Gender: Male
Age: 65
Occupation: None (retired)
Education: B.A. in history
Computer experience: He learned about computers recently and is not a confident user.
Computer(s) owned: An older PC running Windows 98
Screen size: 800x600
Hobbies: Playing chess
Country / Language: U.S.A. / English
Disabilities: Poor eyesight, a slow typer and reader.

Usage situation:

- Alfred only uses his computer a few times a week to see a couple of websites and to check e-mails.
- His oldest daughter gave him her old computer to use to keep in touch, and he has taken a few classes in computer use at his local library.
- He uses e-mail to stay contact with his children and grandchildren. Only a few of his friends use e-mails.

3. JOHN

Name: John
Gender: Male
Age: 42
Occupation: Supervisor of Marketing
Education: BA in Communications
Computer Experience: Has barely used computers outside of work; at work has spent most of his time communicating face-to-face and through telephone
Computer(s) owned: None; PII 300 Mhz with Windows 98 at work
Screen Size: 800x600
Hobbies: Drinking, watching sports, toy train collecting
Country/Language: USA/English
Disability: None

Usage Situation:

- Six months ago, his company reorganized his department to incorporate e-mail for internal and external communications
- Though the people he supervises have begun using e-mail extensively in the past five years to communicate with clients, he has refrained from using e-mail
- He first used a computer in the early 1990's to fill out paperwork, but has not scratched the surface of computer operation in the past ten years
- In order to communicate effectively with his coworkers and clients, John needs to use an e-mail client that he can learn quickly and attain proficiency within a short amount of time.
- John wants to be able to organize his messages in a manner which permits him to easily sort through communications with various people on various subjects

Competitive Analysis

- **Design Framework**

	Outlook Express	Hotmail	Yahoo! Mail
Target Audience	Everyone (who uses Windows)	Everyone who uses email	Any old and new e-mail users in the world
Business goals	Monopolize the market	Monopolize the email market	Attract as many users to Yahoo!.com as possible
Design Constraints	Have to give people a reason to buy Outlook; try to appeal to everyone	Has to be easy to understand and to appeal to a broad cross-section of people (namely, everyone who uses email)	Has to find the balance between attracting people to use their free e-mail with limited capacity and selling the mailbox with bigger capacity and more functions