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Digital Devices: Usability Analysis

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Technology #1 reviewed: iPhone SE

Part 1: What's the point

a. What is this gadget supposed to do? (i.e. what is the feature set?)

I reviewed the iPhone SE which I purchased two years ago. The iPhone SE is a communication device that fits in your pocket, is wireless and has day-to-day technology needs at your fingertips. It includes communication features such as a phone, e-mail, and messaging. It also contains games, social media, movies, acts as a camera, takes video, and a music library just to touch on a few items. Most major online websites now have an app which can be downloaded onto your phone. An iPhone has many features that can be accessed remotely instead of the "old" cell phones original intent which was to just be able to communicate through voice remotely.

b. Who is the intended audience?

The intended audience is anyone that is old enough to operate an iPhone (which I have seen a 2-year old). Anyone that likes technology and instant access to information, games, and communication.

Part 2: First Impressions: What is the out of box experience?

After spending 15-30 minutes interacting with the gadget, stop and ask yourself:

a. So, am I having fun? Why? Why not? What SHOULD they have done differently to make this product more accessible, learnable, usable more valuable?

After spending 30 minutes I am having fun and completely engaged. I have been on social media catching up with friends. I am also catching up on email and text messages to my family. I uploaded photos of my dogs to send them via text as well.

Some items that would help in the future are the "alert" features. It's not always intuitive where you need to turn alerts on and off. Sometimes it's within the "app" itself versus going to the "settings" feature, and then locating your app. There are many times some apps have those features within the app, while others have them outside of the app. This was a little annoying with my company email which has features in both places.

b. What works? What doesn't work? What is hard to use/do with the gadget?

What I really like is I can organize my apps the way I want and put the apps into subfolders. For instance, I have a folder called "travel" and my apps for airlines and hotels are in that folder. I have an app called "tickets" which contains my apps for Ticketmaster, Live Nation, Stubhub, Vivid Seats and Bands in Town.
What's not working is that my music I just downloaded on my home computer, isn't synching with my iTunes library on my iPhone. I am spending time trying to figure out how to synch the two, when

it should automatically through the cloud. I have shut down and rebooted my home computer and iPhone multiple times.

There's not too much with this gadget that's difficult to use. Probably the biggest thing for me is that when I take a picture it's not always quality regardless if you have the flash on or off. The zoom feature does not automatically filter your pictures and they are low quality many times (especially in weird lighting situations). I wish the camera feature was enhanced to take better pictures in dark areas.

Part 3: Second Impressions: Reflections after use

After spending 1-2 hours interacting with the gadget, stop and ask yourself:

a. So, am I having fun? Why? Why not? What SHOULD they have done differently to make this product more accessible, learnable, usable more valuable?

I am still having fun and also being very productive. I am responding to work email in my email app, synching my FitBit, downloaded tickets for a concert this evening to my "wallet", created my grocery list in my "notes" app, paid some bills from my Bank of America app, made a dinner reservation through OpenTable, caught up with Facebook and Instagram posts for the day, and texted my family throughout the 90 minutes.   There isn't anything new I haven't mentioned that could make the phone more accessible, learnable, or valuable.

b. What works? What doesn't work? What is hard to use/do with the gadget?

I shut down my phone since my iTunes still wasn't synching with my music library. When I did that, it took a minute or so to start back up. That's not the most ideal if you download music and need to leave your house quickly. When all else fails the answer typically is to shut down the phone and start back up and you can get the data to synch up.

What is sometimes hard to use is the fact I have a ton of apps which create *pages* of apps. I wish on the front page there was a page sorting structure, so you could jump from page to page more quickly. Right now, if you want to get to the page with the last apps you didn't have to scroll through all the other pages first which is not convenient.

Part 4: Wrap up: So, would you buy this for YOUR child or YOURSELF?

a. The good: Identify 3 nifty, clever, cool, provocative things about this gadget and what if any educational merit does it have? Be concrete and give 1-2 sentences explanation for each bullet.
   1. Apple devices will synch your data to the iCloud. You can synch your data for your photos, videos, music, and email as well as the apps themselves, and they will appear with the same data across all devices.
   2. I love the tracking feature on the device. It's very helpful with map and traffic apps (google maps and Waze) which tracks your location and allows you to get directions quickly. Since these apps know your location, they point you on the easiest route without having to type in addresses or looking them up first to manually enter. The traffic/map apps will also route you around traffic accidents and back-ups which is amazing and very helpful (especially with DFW traffic)!

3. From an educational point of view, the most recent way I've used my iPhone is downloading assessment or game apps such as Kahoot! Or Socrative. Both of these apps I have used my iPhone to run games or quizzes in an ILT setting. It kept the learners engaged and interactive, and also allowed there to be instant results, leaderboards, etc from a learning perspective.

b. The bad: Identify 3 nasty, unpleasant, frustrating things about this gadget. Be concrete and give 1-2 sentences explanation for each bullet.
    1. The iPhone SE needs app updates and iOS updates quite often. This takes up more memory and storage on your phone and is inconvenient.
    2. I like that you can use less of your cell data if you are connected to a WiFi network. However, if there is low coverage on a WiFi network, or the network is unsecured, there are sometimes issues that you do not realize are happening. For instance, at times when my iPhone connects to an "unsecured" setting, the phone displays the WiFi bars full. However, the wireless data is draining the battery and spinning trying to connect to your phone. you will lose connection to your data, but most often will not even realize it's happening. Since it shows you have "full bars" on your Wi-Fi, you don't always know this is an issue.
    3. It's addictive, which is a huge problem. With all the alerts you can turn on to stay connected, you end up losing touch with what's going on around you. It serves the purpose you want it to (to receive instant updates), but the addiction is bad from a social perspective. It's almost becoming rude, because people can't help checking it every time a notification appears.

c. The new: Identify 3 ways in which the product could be improved.
    1. The phone takes too long to start up once it's shut down. An improvement would be to speed up the startup time when you turn the phone on.
    2. Create a drop-down menu on the front page of the device that would show the app pages behind the first screen. This would allow you to get through your "app pages" more quickly.
    3. Longer battery life. I had to buy a Mophie backup charger to get through a typical day and not have to plug in a phone charger. When you use your phone on a regular basis throughout the day, this becomes a problem.

Bottom line: Why would you or why you not buy this for your (or a) child (for you)?

I don't have a child, but I personally will continue to buy iPhones. I love iOS devices and am an avid Apple user. The biggest reason I use Apple is because it carries my downloaded apps across all of my devices and remembers the history. For example, if I'm playing a game on my iPad, it knows what level I'm on when I log in another iOS device. I have an iPhone, iPod, iPad, MacBook Pro, and Apple Watch that all synch up. I love that they "talk" to each other to stay synched. If I have ever replaced one of the devices, or got a new one, all of the apps I have on the other devices synch up. This is by far my favorite feature and reason for having them.

I love that the iPhone SE fits in your pocket. If they don't keep iPhones as small as the iPhone 5 or SE (4-inches), then I will not carry an iPhone. That is one of the biggest reasons I enjoy the device. I don't want to carry a phone as big as a tablet, and the iPhone still has a smaller option available.

Lastly the latest feature that I have really enjoyed is that it synchs to my new car. I love that I can get calls and texts on my car, and it picks up my music library to play through the cars stereo all hands free.

Include a graphic image of the item. It can be a product image from the web (with proper citation) or a digital photo that you take.

Apple.com. iPhone SE. Retrieved from https://www.apple.com/iphone-se/

Technology #2 reviewed: Fitbit One

Part 1: What's the point

a. What is this gadget supposed to do? (i.e. what is the feature set?)
The Fitbit One is a small, lightweight fitness tracker, which makes it easy to wear the device and forget you have it on. The device is small enough to fit in your pocket, or you can place it in the provided clip and wear it on your belt/waistband as you would a pedometer. The Fitbit One is also a sleep tracker. The device tracks your steps, sleep, stairs, distance walked, and calories burned. They don't sell this device anymore, and I got mine five years ago.

b. Who is the intended audience?
Health buffs who want to track their activity, and overall fitness patterns. Anyone can use it, even if you just want to track how many steps you get in a day.

Part 2: First Impressions: What is the out of box experience?

After spending 15-30 minutes interacting with the gadget, stop and ask yourself:

a. So, am I having fun? Why? Why not? What SHOULD they have done differently to make this product more accessible, learnable, usable more valuable?
There's not a lot you can do with the device itself, unless you log onto the website to look up your stats. The device itself says "Hello" and whatever message you have programmed in it from the computer when you pick it up. You can review your count for your steps, miles, stairs, floors and calories burned from the device itself. It also displays the time, and synchs with the Fitbit app on your phone. I always check it to see how far I am from 10,000 steps which is my daily goal. I think they should let you do more from the device itself vs. the app. They have solved for this in the newer models.

b. What works? What doesn't work? What is hard to use/do with the gadget?

What works is you can check your overall status in the various categories mentioned above on the device itself. What doesn't work is if you're in challenges with others, you don't know how you're doing unless you log into the actual app. The device itself doesn't really communicate with others directly.

Part 3: Second Impressions: Reflections after use

After spending 1-2 hours interacting with the gadget, stop and ask yourself:

a. So, am I having fun? Why? Why not? What SHOULD they have done differently to make this product more accessible, learnable, usable more valuable?
To spend 1-2 hours with your Fitbit you definitely need to log into the "app" on your phone to check your status. The app on your phone does more with the information on your device and allows you to enter challenges and competitions with others. They should make the same features on the app available on the device itself.

b. What works? What doesn't work? What is hard to use/do with the gadget?

I really enjoy how the Fitbit allows you to enter challenges with others. It also allows you to set goals in each of the categories and notifies you when you achieve them (and the device vibrates). It allows you to flip through your history as well so you can see how you did on previous days.

What doesn't work is the alerts do not appear on the device itself. All communication is done through the mobile app. It's hard to know how you're doing when you're in competitions unless you log in. Other devices will alert you to your overall status and how you're comparing to others.

Part 4: Wrap up: So, would you buy this for YOUR child or YOURSELF?

a. The good: Identify 3 nifty, clever, cool, provocative things about this gadget and what if any educational merit does it have? Be concrete and give 1-2 sentences explanation for each bullet.

    1. You can challenge other Fitbit users to competitions. It allows you to pick daily or weekly challenges against others in your community.

    2. I love that the app gives me reminders and pushes me when I'm close to my goal. It will always send words of encouragement if I am close to one of my daily goals.

    3. You can get "badges" for hitting different goals in a day. There are badges in each category such as stairs, distance, steps, on a daily, weekly and lifetime milestones.

b. The bad: Identify 3 nasty, unpleasant, frustrating things about this gadget. Be concrete and give 1-2 sentences explanation for each bullet.
    1. It doesn't talk to your community on the device itself. You always have to log in the app to see what's going on with others.
    2. Sometimes it doesn't synch. When this happens I have to get it to a full charge and try and turn it off/on multiple times. It's not easy to turn off so I will spend greater than 30 minutes at time trying to synch the device.
    3. The device is not waterproof. If you drop the device in water you need to put it in "rice" and sometimes it will start up again. Most of the time it's "done".
c. The new: Identify 3 ways in which the product could be improved.
    1. The on/off on the device it not easy to perform. It's very hard to shut it down, so this is definitely an area they could fix.
    2. The alerts on your device could include communication from those in your community. That is definitely a downside to the device.
    3. You can not review your history from the device. There should be a function to let you scroll and go back to previous days to see how you are comparing.

Bottom line: Why would you or why you not buy this for your (or a) child (for you)?

I love my Fitbit One because it's very small and can fit in your pocket. You don't have to wear it on your arm, and definitely don't have to wear it on a clip. Every morning I put it in my pocket and my goal is to get 10,000 steps per day. I probably won't buy another one once this is complete, because I also have an Apple Watch which tracks fitness as well. I do love the community aspect of this device as it keeps you competitive with others.

Include a graphic image of the item. It can be a product image from the web (with proper citation) or a digital photo that you take.

Live Science. Fitbit One. Retrieved from https://www.livescience.com/43781-fitbit-one-fitness-tracker-review.html

Technology #3 reviewed: Apple Watch – Series 1 – 42MM

Part 1: What's the point

c. What is this gadget supposed to do? (i.e. what is the feature set?)
    The Apple watch tells time, date, and weather like most other "digital" watches. However, the main features that I use it for are tracking my activity, measuring my workouts and monitoring my health. You can challenge yourself to different indoor and outdoor workouts, and it also pairs with gym equipment.   You can view your activity rings, get directions, or make purchases with Apple Pay instantly. From a health and wellness standpoint, it will make you be more aware of your overall health, better manage stress, and check your heart rate. You are sent daily summaries of your resting, walking, and workout recovery heart rate. It will also let you know if you're behind in your activity from where you are on an average day.

d. Who is the intended audience?
    Those who love the Fitbit but want to wear something more fashionable, that also serves as a communication device. The Apple watches are more attractive and have interchangeable bands that look like real watches versus sporty fitness devices. Those who are into health and fitness monitoring also are attracted to this watch for those features.

Part 2: First Impressions: What is the out of box experience?

After spending 15-30 minutes interacting with the gadget, stop and ask yourself:

d. So, am I having fun? Why? Why not? What SHOULD they have done differently to make this product more accessible, learnable, usable more valuable?
    It's all about the Activity rings for me. I love walking and running and watching the rings get closer to my health and fitness goals every day. I also wear it as a time piece, which I know most people don't (they use their phones and other devices). Since I use it through Bluetooth and don't have phone service, I get the same alerts as my iPhone.

e. What works? What doesn't work? What is hard to use/do with the gadget?

    Not all apps will transfer from an iPhone or iPad to the Apple watch. The ones I enjoy the most are the sports updates, and CNN alerts. I also get message updates, and your watch vibrates when your phone rings. The other feature I like is that it tells me the outdoor temperature at the location I am in. This is fantastic because I look at it every morning before I get ready to see what I should wear. Especially when I let my dogs out in the morning, this is helpful to know whether or not to grab a jacket.

    What doesn't always work correctly are the Exercise rings. I'm not sure what's happened over time, but it doesn't track my exercise like it did the first year I had the watch. It does track my "stand time" and "calories" without any issues.

Part 3: Second Impressions: Reflections after use

After spending 1-2 hours interacting with the gadget, stop and ask yourself:

c.   So, am I having fun? Why? Why not? What SHOULD they have done differently to make this product more accessible, learnable, usable more valuable?

I enjoy using the stop watch feature on the device. It's great if you want to time something quickly (it's just one swipe to turn on). I don't know if I'm having fun, but I do enjoy accessing the different features after playing with it during the past hour. You are able to change the face of the watch to a variety of options, and even include your own picture as your watch face.

What's confusing on the watch at times is getting to the apps within the watch. It's hard to find them which makes me not go to that feature often.

d.   What works? What doesn't work? What is hard to use/do with the gadget?

My favorite feature is at ten minutes until the hour if you haven't stood up for the length of time you need to it will "alert" you to at least get up out of your chair. This is a great reminder that you need to keep moving if you've been sitting too long. A feature that doesn't work so well is that it's hard to answer the phone with your watch. Sometimes if you pick it up, there's a delay before the person on the other end can hear you.

Part 4: Wrap up: So, would you buy this for YOUR child or YOURSELF?

c.   The good: Identify 3 nifty, clever, cool, provocative things about this gadget and what if any educational merit does it have?. Be concrete and give 1-2 sentences explanation for each bullet.

1.   You can challenge other Apple Watch users to "complete" exercise rings. It also alerts others you connect with on your activity which pushes people during challenges. I'm a competitive person so this is a great feature to keep me active.
2.   I love the app alert feature that keeps you from looking at your phone. It makes the addicting part of the iPhone and other devices not so obnoxious and noticeable.
3.   I like the fitness apps that pair with it. For instance I am in a Heart study through a company that is testing recording information for TeleMedicine and monitoring different activities, but the study is only working with those with Apple Watches.

d.   The bad: Identify 3 nasty, unpleasant, frustrating things about this gadget. Be concrete and give 1-2 sentences explanation for each bullet.

1.   Sometimes if I bump the face of the watch, it flips over to the stop watch. It's really annoying that can happen so easily.
2.   It's hard to get to the apps. I am constantly going to three other interfaces before I get to the apps b/c it's not intuitive.
3.   My watch is not waterproof, so I am constantly having to take it off. The newer watches are, but I have a pool and like to swim in the summer. If I am swimming and have the watch on, I might be very active, but it looks like I've done nothing that day. It's very frustrating.

f.   The new: Identify 3 ways in which the product could be improved.

1.   I think the phone feature can be improved on the "delay" of the connection. If I answer my phone from my watch, it sometimes takes 10 seconds of saying "hello" before the person on the other end can hear me.
2.   The alerts do not take you to into their app once you click on them. They are only "alerts" so you cannot connect to the app directly to get more information. If they could make the apps fully accessible that would be great.
3.   I cannot go to a previous day workout directly from the watch. You have to go into the app on your phone to view your history. You would think you could swipe through the activity tracking to backtrack into previous Activity history.

Bottom line: Why would you or why you not buy this for your (or a) child (for you)?

I will always wear an Apple Watch or something similar in nature. I do want to upgrade in the next year, as the newer watches are waterproof and have more features. The reason I like it is I have worn a watch on my wrist since I was very young. The younger generation uses devices to tell time, so watches are going by the wayside. It's not the "classic" timepiece, however it still does the same thing (time, date, etc.) that a regular watch provides which is the first reason I purchased it. The second was about the Activity features for Health and Fitness purposes. The third was the alerts from your iPhone through Bluetooth. It alerts you but you don't seem as obnoxious looking at your phone all the time.

Include a graphic image of the item. It can be a product image from the web (with proper citation) or a digital photo that you take.

Apple.com. Apple watch series 1. Retrieved from https://www.apple.com/apple-watch-series-1/