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IndD 302

Digital Camera Design

Usability Report

The point-and-shoot camera project brought an interesting market into focus. Etsy sellers were my chosen target market and blogging enthusiasts were a close secondary market. Etsy, an online marketplace where artisans sell handmade and vintage goods, urges its sellers to self-curate their product photography. A successful Etsy seller is capable of showing the craft behind a piece, giving the buyer a sense of connection, and describing the details and scale within five images. I preceded my design process with the following project objective: design an image-capturing device that facilitates individuals with an online presence to communicate their lives and products more efficiently.

The initial form development went through many stages. The final concept fits into a "prosumer" level camera. As the name suggests, prosumer is the stage found between consumer and professional level. The concept assumes a professional style grip where the user holds the grip with their right hand and the bottom of the camera and lens with the left. Affordances that express this include a large lens barrel with contrasting focus and zoom rings and the curved left side of the body. A prosumer camera would be a likely camera purchase for many in my intended target group. Many are upgrading from smaller and possibly outdated point-and-shoot cameras that do not measure up to the quality of images they are striving for. Along the way, ideas of helpful features for Etsy sellers arose. Things like wifi connectivity, articulating screen and handle, which provides access to various shooting angles, and removable flash units enhance the usability and efficiency of this camera.

The initial user interface I have developed is meant to promote visibility and directness by relating the buttons to what appears on the screen. This provides an intuitive mesh between the physical and virtual. Mimicking the button shape with graphic elements on the screen and having navigational button elements that remain consistent throughout the interface helped accomplish this. This way the auxiliary buttons could be reduced down to only the essentials.

Testing of the interface began by using paper models and the Think Aloud Protocol. The process quickly showed that the interface was versatile and predictable, allowing the user to complete many tasks easily. Translating the paper model into Flash brought about a greater level of detail. That detail brought about a few issues. With the paper model, the timing of animated effects was irrelevant. In Flash timing was an entirely new consideration in the design.

One question that arose from testing the Flash interface dealt with the delete image function. In the rest of the interface, the three buttons on the bottom of the screen selected the graphic element on the screen relative to their position. With the delete function, the user selects the waste bin button to bring up a prompt asking, "Delete image?" and the two outer buttons correspond to "No" and "Yes." They were both set to immediately complete the action based on which button was pressed with no further confirmation. While this is consistent, having another screen asking, "Are you sure?" could feasibly be good for error

prevention, but would reduce efficiency. However, further testing of two digital interfaces, one with the confirmation screen and one without, revealed the majority of subjects were merely annoyed by the extra level of confirmation. Therefore, deletion was left as a two-step process– one click on the waste bin button and one on the "Yes" button.

Another confusing element involved the startup greeting. The camera was setup to say, "good morning", "good afternoon", "good evening", or "good night" based on the time of day. Unfortunately, the evening and night phrases seem more appropriate on shut down as if you were putting the camera to sleep. Enough electronic devices in history used animate features that cause user perception to lean this direction. To alleviate this issue yet retain an element of time, the screen now says, "Hello," on startup and "Have a good [time of day]," on shut down.