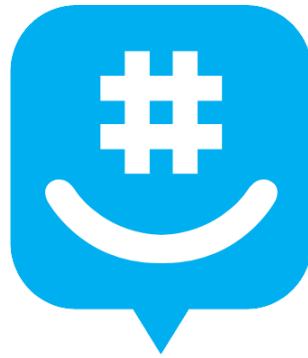

GroupMe

Usability Testing Findings Report



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Executive Summary

This document is a report of our findings after conducting a series of tests on the mobile app GroupMe. To begin, we will define usability testing, the main objective for conducting this research, and the logic behind our tests. We aim to explain why usability testing is important for the success of the app and how the findings can help the app continue to thrive and stay ahead of the game to meet the needs of its users. Our team will present our research goals as well as our usability testing plan. This includes the questions we have used during our in-person testing sessions, our competitive analysis, and our heuristics evaluation. All of this data will be analyzed and we will dive into key insights and emergent findings. We end the report by providing recommendations and follow-up action items. You will also find an appendix of our testing questions, data, and supplemental information.

Introduction

The researchers for this project are Ana Velarde, Austin Greenway, and Nigel Jordan. We are a team of three students from the Interaction Design program at Kennesaw State University. We have chosen to conduct a series of Usability Testing on the GroupMe mobile app during the time frame of November 8-19, 2021.

Jakob Nielsen has defined “Usability” as a “quality attribute that assesses how easy user interfaces are to use. The word "usability" also refers to methods for improving ease-of-use during the design process.” Usability testing refers to the process of evaluating products or services by testing them with participant users who will then complete a set of tasks as observers sit back and gather notes on the experience. For our testing, we approached five participants to observe.

Our team has recognized that GroupMe is primarily utilized by students at Kennesaw State University to communicate with one another in regards to classes that they participate in together. Our team has also had first-hand experience with using the app to collaborate with students across campus. We saw this assignment as a great opportunity to dive into what makes the GroupMe app so distinctive for students for the app to be considered one of their top choices for group messaging. We also wanted to uncover any unfavorable components or experiences of the app to propose future updates that will help keep GroupMe a top choice for people. Our team considers ourselves thoroughly familiarized with GroupMe and felt that we are at an advantage when speaking on its capabilities and selecting the most important features to evaluate in the usability tests.

The goals of conducting usability testing include establishing a baseline of user performance, establishing and validating user performance measures, and identifying potential design concerns to be addressed in order to improve efficiency, productivity, and end-user satisfaction.

Goals of the research

Our main goal of the research was to understand the GroupMe user and uncover sufficient data for your company to gain more insight into user feedback, pain points, and favorable features in your application. With this data, we sought to assemble a set of recommendations and future action items to support the GroupMe team and promote discussions on what can be updated and/or integrated into the app to stay a top choice for its users.

For this research, we focused on:

- What features users are utilizing the most
- What features are often overlooked/underutilized and how we may bring them to light
- How to improve overall app experience
- Provide a baseline of how users are feeling about the GroupMe app

Through our findings, we aim to promote:

- Ideas for fixes/improvements

- Data for future product development
- Ideas for keeping GroupMe competitive in the market

Answering the Research Questions

After thorough consideration, our team selected 10 questions that we believe touched on all levels of difficulty. Some steps we believe the participants are familiarized with as they use it on a regular basis, while some other steps took them into menus that may be underused. We wanted to witness what steps our users followed easily and also which ones they encountered difficulty with.

Our team used the “Think Out Loud” methodology and asked the participants to vocally report everything that goes through their minds while completing the task. The assigned tasks are as follows:

1) Add a member to a group

- (1) The participant was asked to open up GroupMe and create a new group.
- (2) To create a new group, the user will click the button on the top right hand side of the screen, followed by “Start Group”.
- (3) Adding an Avatar will be optional. Participants must type in a group name and click “Next” to proceed.
- (4) The participant can then type in a contact name or phone number to add a new user to the new group.

2) Post a message and manually reply directly to that message

- (1) The participant was asked to type in a single message into the group chat.
- (2) Once they have sent in the message, they were asked to reply to that first message using the “Reply” function
- (3) “Reply” function is found by holding down a message until a three option menu appears.

3) Share a document file

- (1) The participant was asked to find the function to share a document that is located on the bottom right hand side of the screen (+ Icon).
- (2) The participant had the option to share a photo, or a document file.

4) Share your location with another user

- (1) The participant was asked to find the function to share their location.
- (2) The participants shared their current location within the group chat.

5) Create a poll

- (1) The participant was asked to find the function to add a poll into the group chat (+ Icon)
- (2) Participants can then create a simple two option poll asking what part of the project they should start next.

6) Leave and rejoin a group

- (1) The participant was asked to find the option to leave a group.
- (2) After leaving a group, they will attempt to rejoin the group from the “Menu” > “Archive” option.

7) Attempt to make a Skype call within the GroupMe app

(1) The participant was asked to locate the option to make a Skype call and attempt to initiate a call with members of the group.

8) Present your QR code associated with your GroupMe account

(1) The participant was asked to find and display to the moderator their QR code associated with their account.

9) Hide a message after sending it and then unhide the message

(1) The participant was asked to find and “hide” a message that they have shared in the group chat.

(2) Once hidden, the next task will be to locate the option to “unhide” this message.

10) Mark all messages as read

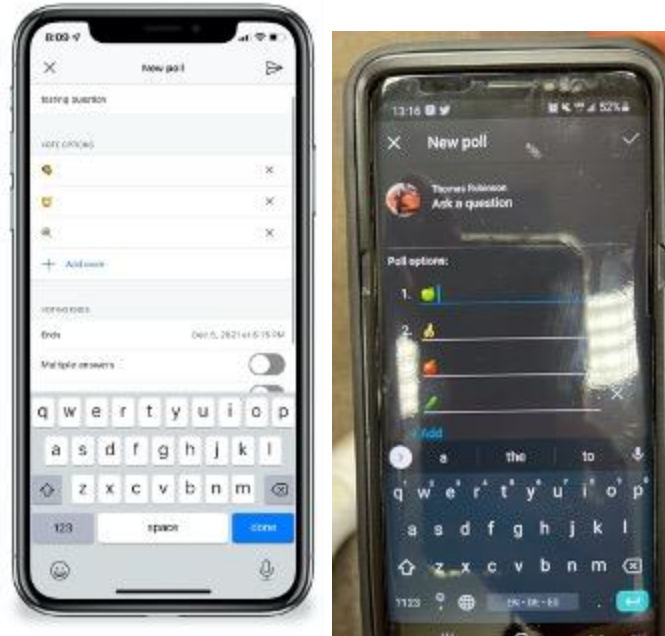
(1) The participant was asked to mark all messages as read to clear out any pending notifications.

Emergent Findings

Going into our testing, we were more concerned about the tasks inside of the app; specifically the tasks from an iOS perspective. However, while we were testing our third user we realized that the iOS and the Android GroupMe apps contained a few differences that slightly interfered with our set tasks. Some of the tasks that we asked users to complete needed to be worded differently in order to be executed on an Android device.

One of the tasks required users to create a poll. In order for a poll to be created, the app requires a poll question, voting options, time and privacy options. The layout for iOS prompts users to “Type poll question here” while the Android app uses “Ask a question”. During this

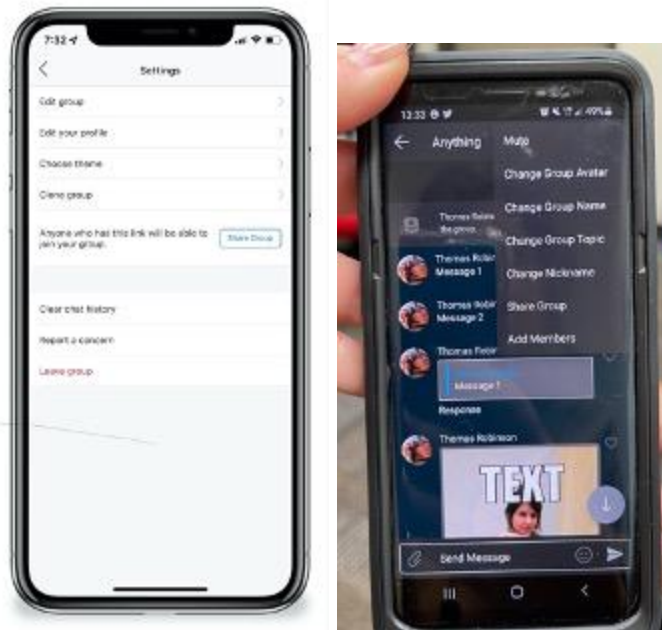
portion of the testing, our Android user asked “Do I get to name the poll?” only after finishing the other inputs in the poll section. “I didn’t really realize that was a button or a text field. It doesn’t really have anything surrounding it... I was like where do I name it.” He initially bypasses the title feature because he assumed it was an instruction instead of a button.



Some of the other features in the app were inconsistent across the two systems. The home screen layouts differed and some of the symbols were not the same.



Chat settings were also one of the differences that we noticed between the systems. The iOS version takes users to a separate screen while the Android users are shown a smaller screen with lesser tasks. The Android tasks exclude “Choose Theme”, “Clone Group”, “Clear Chat History”, “Clear Chat History”, “Report a Concern”, “Edit Your Profile” and “Edit Group”.



These were unexpected learnings for us. Our team feels that the differences between the systems may not harm the application’s success since most users have the app for simple communication. Further down the line as user needs continue to grow, GroupMe might run into some issues if users have different systems.

List of key insights

Our users were able to complete the majority of tasks in our usability testing with moderate ease. 88% of all tasks attempted were properly completed within a reasonable amount of time. There were, however, some tasks that our users found more difficult to complete than the others, such as Marking All Messages as Read and Leaving/Rejoining Groups. Several of our users cited that the Archive feature was initially confusing. Additionally, three of our five users stated that the “Glasses” icon for Mark All Messages as Read was not intuitive or matching traditional standards. In Table 1.1 below, the successful completions for our Usability Testing are shown.

Task	Successful Completions (out of 5)
Create Group + Add Member	4
Direct Reply	4
Share Document	5
Share Location	5
Create a Poll	5
Leave and Rejoin Group	3
Make a Skype Call	5
Present QR Code	5
Hide/Unhide Messages	5

Mark Messages as Read	3
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Table 1.1: Shows successful completion of tasks from our Usability Testing

While completion percentage of tasks did reveal areas of improvement for GroupMe, our key finding was lack of awareness of the features that we described in our tasks from our users. While 88% of tasks were completed successfully by our users, only 72% of the total features presented were previously known by our users. In Table 1.2, The number of users that were unaware of the feature described in the task is shown.

Task	Number of Users that were unaware of the feature described in the task (out of 5)
Create Group + Add Member	0
Direct Reply	2
Share Document	0
Share Location	3
Create a Poll	0
Leave and Rejoin Group	1
Make a Skype Call	0
Present QR Code	2
Hide/Unhide Messages	3
Mark Messages as Read	3

Table 1.2: Shows users that were unaware of the feature described in our tasks from our Usability Testing

40% of users were unaware that they could direct reply to messages and present their QR code to be added to a group. 60% of users were unaware that they could share their location, hide/unhide messages, and mark messages as read. The key features that were exhibited in our usability testing serve to improve the users' experience while using the

application. However, we believe that GroupMe could do more to ensure that its users are informed about the application's capabilities.

Each of our 5 users were able to complete the task "Make a Skype Call." However, each of the 5 users specifically cited that they did not like that when clicking on the Skype button, they were taken out of the GroupMe application and to the Skype page in their web browser.

Recommendations + Action Items

After completing our research methods, our team has gained valuable insights into the GroupMe application that would serve to improve the user experience. The following list of items explain our key recommendations for GroupMe, which were drawn from our Usability Testing, Competitive Analysis, and Heuristic Evaluation:

- Create a robust "Guided Tour" of the application and its features that the user must complete upon downloading.
 - This will ensure that users are exposed to GroupMe's features, allowing them to use the application most efficiently.
- Include an "Undo" button to allow for greater error prevention.
 - This would allow the user to exit from unwanted states or overturn unintended actions.
- Integrate the Skype calling feature within the application or develop your own voice calling feature within the application.

- Each of our users stated that because the calling feature took them out of the application, they would not use it. Our competitive analysis revealed that GroupMe's primary competitors have a calling feature natively within their application.
- Create a more streamlined method of rejoining groups after leaving the group.
 - Several users cited that the "Archive" feature was confusing.
- Give greater detail in error messages than "Something went wrong."
 - The user needs to be made informed at all times to prevent them from thinking that they may be using the application incorrectly.
- Ensure all symbols on the application clearly convey their intended purpose
- Improve consistency between the iOS and Android GroupMe applications

We hope that you consider these recommendations for the improvement of the GroupMe application.

Appendix

Appendix A: Methodology and research questions

1. Open the GroupMe app on your phone and ensure that you are signed in.
2. Once you are in the app and signed on, start a new group. You can choose to skip out on the Avatar selection. Type in your group name, proceed to the next step, and add a member to that new group.
3. Post a text message in the group chat and manually reply directly to that message.
4. Share a photo or document in the group chat.
5. Share your current location with the group.
6. Create a simple, two option poll in the group to discuss what you should start next on the project.
7. Leave and attempt to rejoin the group.
8. Attempt to make a skype call within the GroupMe app.
9. Present the QR code associated with your GroupMe account to the moderator.
10. Hide a message after sending it and then locate the option to unhide the message.

Appendix B: Survey questions

1. I think that I would like to use this system frequently.
2. I found this system unnecessarily complex.
3. I thought that system was easy to use.
4. I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use this.
5. I found the various functions in this system to be well integrated.

6. I thought there was too much inconsistency in this system.
7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very quickly.
8. I found this system very cumbersome to use.
9. I felt very confident using this system.
10. I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this system.

Appendix C: Additional tables, charts, notes, etc. for competitor analysis

Competitive Analysis Chart:

Competitor Feature Comparison Card		GroupMe	Discord	Slack	MS Teams
Location Sharing	<i>Users can share their current physical location with other users</i>	✓	✗	✗	✓
File Sharing	<i>Users can send share files (images, PDFs, word documents)</i>	✓ (50MB)	✓ (8MB)	✓ (1GB)	✓ (50MB)
Group Chat	<i>Users can send text messages with other users</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
Voice Chat	<i>Users can participate in voice calls through the app</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓
Video Chat	<i>Users can participate in video calls through the app</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓

Appendix D: Nielsen's 10 Heuristics

1. Visibility of System Status
2. Match between System and Real World
3. User Control and Freedom
4. Consistency and Standards
5. Error Prevention
6. Recognition Rather than Recall
7. Flexibility and Efficiency of Use
8. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

9. Help Users Cognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors

10. Help and Documentation

Heuristic Evaluation link:

https://xd.adobe.com/view/ad20b298-343e-4f89-b5ad-084bc2f66cc6-f873/

See attached file for our full heuristic evaluation*

Appendix E: Usability Testing Notes

GROUP ME USER TESTING

PERSON ONE

1. Make group "ohmy" ✓
2. Add another person "ohmy" ✓
3. Manually reply ✓
4. Add photo or document ✓
5. Share location ✓
6. Create poll ✓
7. Leave group ✓
8. Attempt to rejoin X
9. Make skype call ✓
10. Show QR code ✓
11. Send something quick and hide it ✓
12. Unhide a message ✓
13. Read all messages (info going out about)

Handwritten notes for Person One:
 - has trouble adding and sharing location
 - not first she didn't see it
 - first to hold it down
 - went to settings
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down

PERSON TWO

1. Make group ✓
2. Manually reply ✓
3. Add photo/document ✓
4. Share location ✓
5. Create poll ✓
6. Leave and rejoin group ✓
7. Make skype call ✓
8. Show QR code ✓
9. Mark all messages as read ✓
10. Hide/unhide message ✓

Handwritten notes for Person Two:
 - this part always confuse me
 - I'll assume its fine
 - didn't know maybe settings? she could
 - confirm about leaving group
 - I figured how to rejoin recently
 - not sure glasses
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down

PERSON THREE

1. Make group ✓
2. Manually reply ✓
3. Add photo/document ✓
4. Share location ✓
5. Create poll ✓
6. Leave and rejoin group ✓
7. Make video call ✓
8. Show QR code ✓
9. Mark all messages as read ✓
10. Hide/unhide message ✓

Handwritten notes for Person Three:
 - profess discord
 - android
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down

PERSON FIVE

1. Make group ✓
2. Manually reply ✓
3. Add photo/document ✓
4. Share location ✓
5. Create poll ✓
6. Leave and rejoin group ✓
7. Make skype call ✓
8. Show QR code ✓
9. Mark all messages as read ✓
10. Hide/unhide message ✓

Handwritten notes for Person Five:
 - barely use FB messenger
 - not on his phone
 - not on his phone
 - not on his phone

PERSON FOUR

1. Make group ✓
2. Manually reply ✓
3. Add photo/document ✓
4. Share location ✓
5. Create poll ✓
6. Leave and rejoin group ✓
7. Make video call ✓
8. Show QR code ✓
9. Mark all messages as read ✓
10. Hide/unhide message ✓

Handwritten notes for Person Four:
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down

PERSON SIX

1. Make group ✓
2. Manually reply ✓
3. Add photo/document ✓
4. Share location ✓
5. Create poll ✓
6. Leave and rejoin group ✓
7. Make video call ✓
8. Show QR code ✓
9. Mark all messages as read ✓
10. Hide/unhide message ✓

Handwritten notes for Person Six:
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down
 - first to hold it down

User Test 1

Task 1 (Create group and add member):

-failed to add member first time but was able to make it work

Task 2 (Direct Reply):

-failed to execute the task properly

Task 3 (Share document):

-Completed successfully

Task 4 (Share location):

-Completed successfully

Task 5 (Create a poll):

-Completed successfully

Task 6 (Leave and rejoin group):

-Could not rejoin without explanation

Task 7 (Make a skype call):

-Completed successfully

“Took out of the app and the site loaded slowly”

Task 8 (QR Code):

-Completed successfully

Task 9 (Hide/Unhide message):

--Completed successfully

Task 10 (Mark as Read):

-Completed successfully

“First held down message, then went to settings, then pressed glasses”

Comments:

“App is easy to use”

“Primarily used for school”

“No other messaging apps used”

“Did not know you could rejoin groups”

User Test 2

Task 1 (Create group and add member):

-Completed successfully

“Adding members is always confusing”

Task 2 (Direct Reply):

-Completed successfully

Task 3 (Share document):

-Completed successfully

Task 4 (Share location):

-Completed successfully

“First went to settings before finding it.”

“Didn’t know you could share location”

Task 5 (Create a poll):

-Completed successfully

Task 6 (Leave and rejoin group):

-Completed successfully

Task 7 (Make a skype call):

-Completed successfully

“I don’t like that it took me out of the app”

Task 8 (QR Code):

-Completed successfully with difficulty

“first went to settings”

“didn’t know about this feature”

Task 9 (Hide/Unhide message):

-Completed successfully

“didn’t know about this feature”

Task 10 (Mark as Read):

“didn’t know about this feature”

Comments:

“App is pretty good”

“Knew how to complete most of the tasks”

“No other group messaging apps used”

“All school related”

User Test 3 (Android)

Task 1 (Create group and add member):

-Completed successfully

Task 2 (Direct Reply):

- Completed successfully

Task 3 (Share document):

-Completed successfully

“didn’t know about the meme button”

Task 4 (Share location):

- Completed successfully

Task 5 (Create a poll):

- Completed successfully

“felt as though there is a more intuitive way to execute the function”

“no text box around ‘Ask a question’ was confusing”

“no signifier forcing you to ask a question”

Task 6 (Leave and rejoin group):

- Completed successfully

“did not immediately know how to leave”

“figured it out after a lot of scrolling”

Task 7 (Make a skype call):

- Completed successfully

“Pulled out of app and received an error message”

“limited functionality”

“has to allow permissions for mic multiple times”

Task 8 (QR Code):

- Completed successfully

Task 9 (Hide/Unhide message):

- Completed successfully

3 dots>avi>search msgs>could not unhide just 1 message

Task 10 (Mark as Read):

- first pressed “snooze”

- found glasses button

-“no idea what it did until I touched it”

Comments:

“Didn’t know about Mark as Read feature”

“Leaving groups is harder than it should be”

-“A single confirmation is enough; instead have to go 2 menus deep to confirm”

“Uses and prefers Discord”

“GroupMe has no advantages over Discord”

User Test 4

Task 1 (Create group and add member):

- Completed successfully

Task 2 (Direct Reply):

- Completed successfully

Task 3 (Share document):

- Completed successfully

Task 4 (Share location):

- Completed successfully

“Didn’t know about this feature”

Task 5 (Create a poll):

-Completed successfully

Task 6 (Leave and rejoin group):

- Completed successfully

“first went to search messages to rejoin”

Task 7 (Make a skype call):

- Completed successfully

“Didn’t like that she was pulled out of the app”

Task 8 (QR Code):

- Completed successfully

+ > hamburger menu > share profile

“Confused why you can’t share in group”

Task 9 (Hide/Unhide message):

- Completed successfully

“First tried to hold to hide”

“Didn’t know you could unhide messages”

Task 10 (Mark as Read):

- Completed successfully

“Knew about both glasses and slide feature”

Comments:

“Only used for school”

“Doesn’t use any other messaging apps”

“No recommendations for the app”

User Test 5

Task 1 (Create group and add member):

- Completed successfully

Task 2 (Direct Reply):

- Completed successfully

“Didn’t know about this feature”

Task 3 (Share document):

- Completed successfully

Task 4 (Share location):

- Completed successfully

“Didn’t know about this feature”

Task 5 (Create a poll):

- Completed successfully

Task 6 (Leave and rejoin group):

- Completed successfully with some hesitation

Task 7 (Make a skype call):

- Completed successfully

“Didn’t like being removed from the app”

Task 8 (QR Code):

- Completed successfully

“Experienced difficulty finding how to complete task”

“Tried to click on her own name to complete task”

Task 9 (Hide/Unhide message):

- Completed successfully

Tapping around > + > Search msgs > settings

“Didn’t know about this feature”

Task 10 (Mark as Read):

- Completed successfully

“First tried to hold”

Comments:

“Uses Facebook messenger as an alternative to GroupMe”

“Only uses GM for school and work”

“App is simple”

“QR Code was the most challenging task”