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## **JMA 464: Interaction Design Final Project**

### **USER RESEARCH:**

#### *Executive Summary*

##### ***Need/Problem***

The app I would like to redesign, for certain reasons, is the Microsoft Outlook email web application. In using this application for the past four years while a student here at Duquesne, I've come across a few issues with the user interface. The issues I will present are possible to navigate, however, can be confusing at times when a user is either in a hurry or simply unfamiliar with the interface.

In being consistent with the flat design concept, Microsoft chose to use this design on their Outlook web app. This sort of design can lead to some problems. For one, the color pallet stays relatively consistent and flat with all other design aspects of the interface. As a result, buttons can be difficult to locate, even if the user has a general knowledge of where they are at; ex. Top left of screen, bottom left, top right, or bottom right.

Another issue that has been noticed is the default in replying to other peoples' emails. As set as the interface default, the reply button specifically, is arranged to display a "reply all" text. This can lead to the issue of replying to every person that an email was sent to such as an entire class. If such a thing were to happen when discussing grades or something confidential with a professor or friend, your information can become known knowledge to all in the email chain. To contrast to Gmail.com, their reply button is located within the email itself and is set to the default of just replying to the sender, not everyone the email was sent to. This button is also shown as an arrow, a commonly known symbol in email applications to signal a reply button.

The main portion of this project will be focused on the full-page browser application. The mobile and tablet versions of the Outlook mail application have been polished perfectly for a flawless user interface experience.

### ***Users, goals, tasks***

Users: The users for this application will be specifically focused to Duquesne students and faculty. They are undergraduate students, graduate students, young and old, also professors and all faculty including maintenance members.

The students will have a range of age between 17 and 24. This is the normal age of a college student at any level in their university career. This can vary slightly depending on early admittance because of academic strength and also by longer programs in graduate schools.

The faculty has a wider range of age. This will vary the user knowledge of web applications depending on how young or old the individual is.

#### Goals:

There are two specific goals I wanted to focus on for this project. The first being the composition of an email. This is easier said than done if not familiar with the interface. The second goal will be replying to group emails and emails sent from one individual to only one other individual. I would like to see how long it takes to do both of these tasks and if my redesign of the interface can speed up the process within the Outlook web application.

#### Tasks:

To complete the *first goal* listed above, the user must first login to the Outlook web application service via a Duquesne portal. The login process is very straightforward and interactive. Next, the user must locate the “compose email button” or in this case the “new” button. Once pressed, the blank email will appear where in this case the user will type in the boxes who they would like to send the email to, who they want to be CC’s, adding their subject, and writing the email. After all of this information has been entered, the user will scroll down, depending on length of the email, and press a blue send button. I make this distinction because this is one of the only distinguishable button within this interface that contrasts the design of the application and its background. Once the blue send button is pressed, the email will disappear, without confirmation of sending, and will be greeted with a blank screen with their inbox located to the left, just as the web app looked when first loaded.

To complete the *second goal*, a user will go through the same sign in process. Once logged in, the user will click on an email, located in the list to the left of the screen. After the email has loaded, the user will reply to that email in two cases. They will reply to just the sender, and again to all recipients of the email. In order to accomplish this, the user will press the “reply” button. To hit the “reply” button, the user will have to press the down arrow located next to the “reply all button”. A small dropdown menu will appear and the user can select reply. The blank email will load and the user can enter their content and press the blue “send” button. This will be the same process for a reply all message.

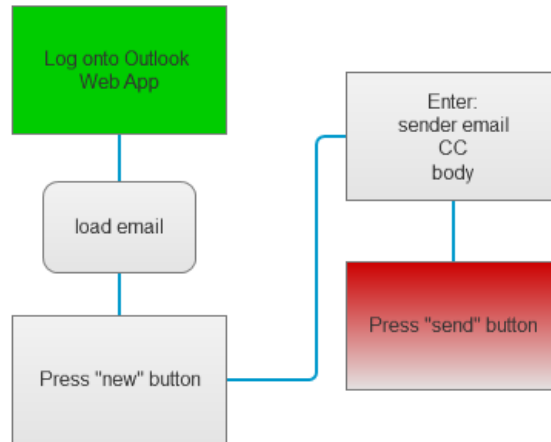
## *Personas*

Alice is a current undergraduate student at Duquesne. She is 18 years old and a current freshman at the school. Alice got her first laptop computer when she was 15 years old and has simple knowledge of how to make it function. She knows how to open applications such as Microsoft Word and also knows how to save her work onto her hard drive. When it comes to the internet, Alice can navigate fairly easy, but does not have any background with design aspects of websites or the way they're supposed to function. Her most popular website to be on is Facebook. She finds it very easy to navigate page to page thanks to recognizable buttons. When she is given her Duquesne email address, she logs onto the Outlook web application with intentions of emailing her advisor to schedule classes for the following semester. After many seconds of looking at the interface, Alice finally finds the button to compose a new email. She fills out her email and hits send.

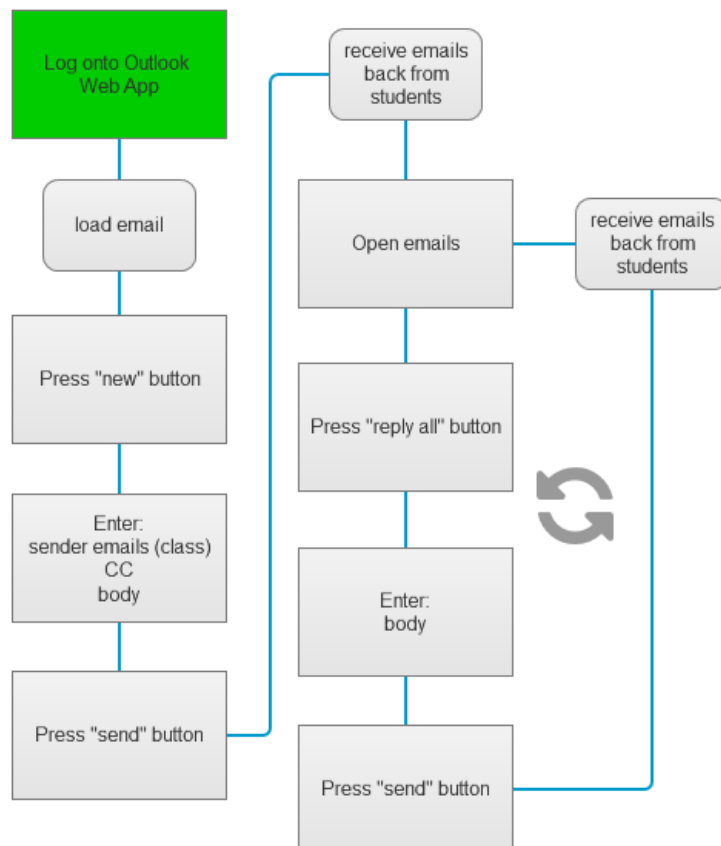
Arthur is a long-time graduate of Duquesne University. He is 67 years old and had graduated decades ago with his masters in Biology. Being that he loved his school so much, he returned as a professor, teaching his students what he learned so long ago. Arthur grew up without computers so his knowledge in them is not abundant, although he knows simple functionality. On the morning of a big exam for his class, Arthur's car will not start due to the cold and he has no other means of transportation to the class. He logs onto his Outlook email web application, begins a new email to all sections of his biology class, and states he cannot make it to the class but the exam will still take place in the next class the following day. In haste of the last-minute setback, Arthur receives a few emails back regarding some questions on the material. To answer a few of his students' questions, he replies to each of them answering their own questions. Without knowing, Arthur accidentally pressed the "reply all" button in his email and had emailed all his students multiple times without context. He is embarrassed and sorry he sent all those emails to his students.

## Task Analysis

### Alice



### Arthur



## DESIGNING ALTERNATIVES:

Storyboards:

Alice:

⋮ Office 365 Outlook		x x ? ○	
Search	Ⓟ @New	v	Delete Archive Junk Sweep
Folders	Inbox		
Inbox	Email		
Sent	_____		
Deleted	Email		
More	_____		
Groups	Email		
	Email		
	_____		

Login – load home page

⋮ Office 365 Outlook		x x ? ○	
Search	Ⓟ @New	v	Delete Archive Junk Sweep
Folders	Inbox		
Inbox	Email		
Sent	_____		
Deleted	Email		
More	_____		
Groups	Email		
	Email		
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Compose new email

Office 365 Outlook		x	x	?	○
Search	@Newsv	Delete	Archive	Junk	Sweep
Folders	Inbox	<div>To</div>			
Inbox	Email	<div>Cc</div>			
Sent	Email	Add subject			
Deleted	Email	Add message here...			
More	Email	<div> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> <span>I</span> <span>U</span> <span>A</span> <span>:</span> </div>			
Groups	Email	<div> <div>Send</div> <div>Discard</div> </div>			

Enter sender information

Office 365 Outlook		x	x	?	○
Search	@Newsv	Delete	Archive	Junk	Sweep
Folders	Inbox	<div>To</div>			
Inbox	Email	<div>Cc</div>			
Sent	Email	Add subject			
Deleted	Email	Add message here...			
More	Email	<div> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> <span>I</span> <span>U</span> <span>A</span> <span>:</span> </div>			
Groups	Email	<div> <div>Send</div> <div>Discard</div> </div>			

Press "send" button

Arthur:

Office 365 Outlook		x	x	?	C	
Search	Q New	v	Delete	Archive	Junk	Sweep
Folders	Inbox					
Inbox	Email					
Sent						
Deleted	Email					
More						
Groups	Email					
	Email					

*Login – load home page*

Office 365 Outlook		x	x	?	○
Search	@New/v	Delete	Archive	Trash	Swipec
Folders	Inbox				
Inbox	Email				
Sent					
Deleted	Email				
More					
Groups	Email				
	Email				

*Compose new email*

Office 365 Outlook		x	x	?	○
Search	@Newsv	Delete	Archive	Junk	Sweep
Folders	Inbox	<div>To</div>			
Inbox	Email	<div>Cc</div>			
Sent	Email	Add subject			
Deleted	Email	Add message here...			
More	Email	<div> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> <span>I</span> <span>U</span> <span>A</span> <span>:</span> <span>=</span> </div>			
Groups	Email	<div> <div>Send</div> <div>Discard</div> </div>			

Enter class information

Office 365 Outlook		x	x	?	○
Search	@Newsv	Delete	Archive	Junk	Sweep
Folders	Inbox	<div>To</div>			
Inbox	Email	<div>Cc</div>			
Sent	Email	Add subject			
Deleted	Email	Add message here...			
More	Email	<div> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> <span>I</span> <span>U</span> <span>A</span> <span>:</span> <span>=</span> </div>			
Groups	Email	<div> <div>Send</div> <div>Discard</div> </div>			

Press "send" button



Office 365 Outlook		x x ? ○	
Search P. @Newly Delete Archive Junk Sweep			
Folders Inbox Sent Deleted More Groups	Inbox	Email Title	Reply All ✓
	Email	JS John Smith	
	Email		
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	Email		

*Receive and open new email from student*

Office 365 Outlook		x x ? ○	
Search P. @Newly Delete Archive Junk Sweep			
Folders Inbox Sent Deleted More Groups	Inbox	Email Title	Reply All ✓
	Email	JS John Smith	
	Email		
	Email		
	Email		

*Reply all to answer students' questions*

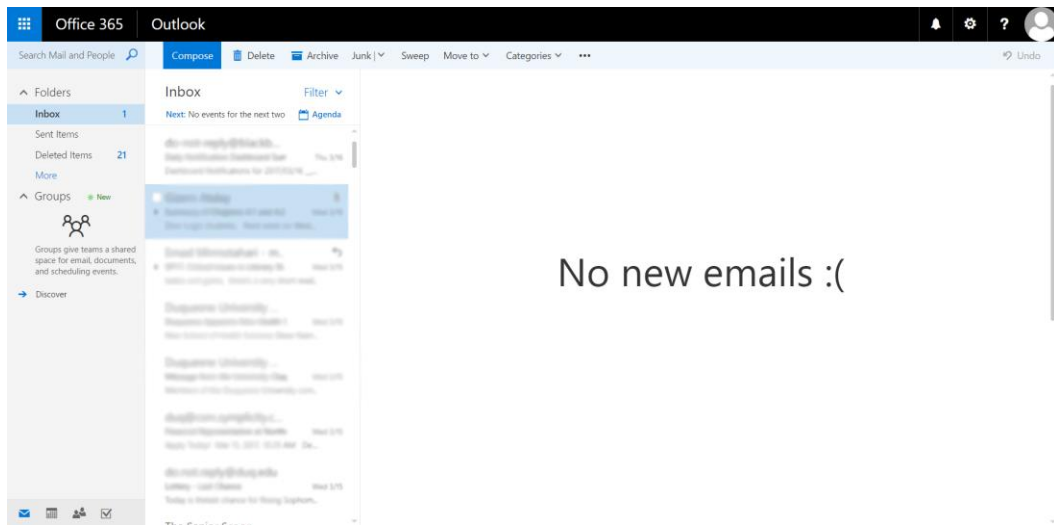
Office 365 Outlook		x x ? ○	
Search	② New	Delete	Archive Junk Sweep
Folders	Inbox	To	
Inbox	Email	Cc	
Sent	Email	Add subject	
Deleted	Email	Add message here...	
More	Email	A B I U A/ :=	
Groups	Email	Send Discard	

Press "send" button

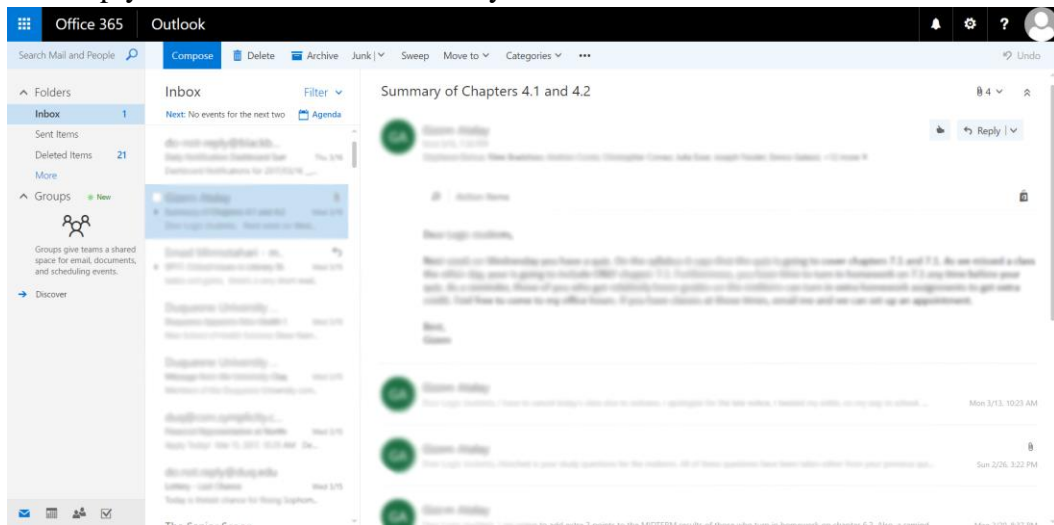
Repeat Process...

## Visual Comps:

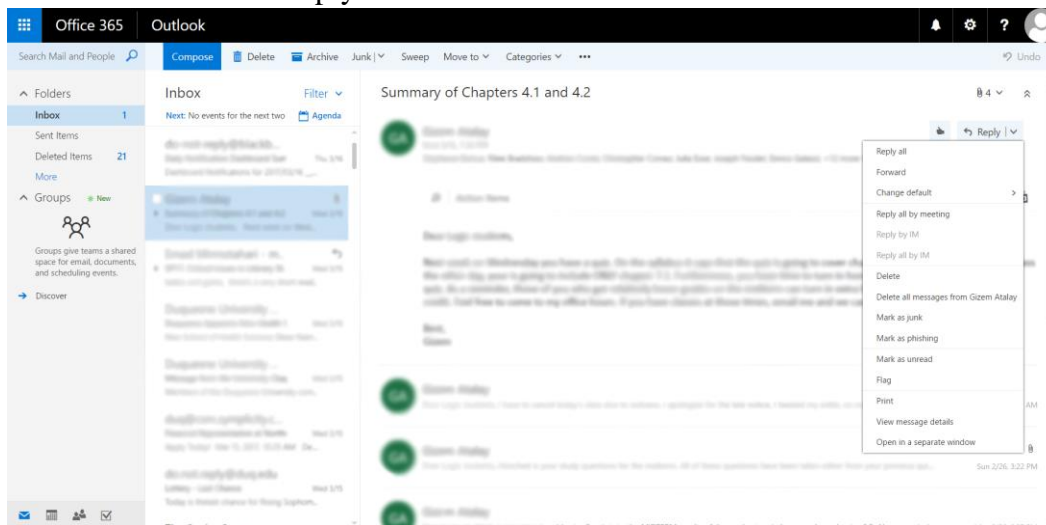
New compose button which stands out than previous version



New reply button in within email body



## New sub-menu under reply button



## PROTOTYPE:

*On class website*

<http://www.jma.duq.edu/users/galassie/pub/jma464/jma464.zip>

## EVALUATION:

In asking two people to perform both of the tasks listed above, I had much more positive results with my new updated interface compared to the current live one on the Outlook website. The two users performed both tasks; creating a new email, and replying to one email only. One of my testers focused on the look of the application. I told him that it was designed in the Axure program so it would not be perfect and he agreed. He said that if it were coded for the internet through html that he was sure I could make it look the exact way it does not, but with the updates. My other user, who was much older, thought it was fun to be testing my new design and said that when using the old one, they had a much more difficult time finding the button to compose new emails and thought that what I did was a perfect idea.

The only design alternative made by my evaluations from my testers and myself was to change some colors around. Some backgrounds were too dark and did not contrast text very well. When all that was fixed, I think everything turned out perfectly and just the way I wanted it to.

Altogether, this was a fun project. I know the two items I changed and updated were very small ones, but from the user testing, I gained a lot of positive insight and feedback which helped me continue this project.