Schedule Buddy Usability Report

Rachel Dormido

November 2018

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Introduction

Schedule Buddy is a smart planner app aimed at helping students manage their time and get their homework and studying done in advance. It does this by planning study sessions for the user based on their due dates and the difficulty of the assignment or exam subject. First, the user to creates a schedule of their busy times, referred to as schedule events. Then whenever the user enters a new assignment or exam (referred to as a task) and its anticipated difficulty, the app intelligently schedules sessions for the user to work on the assignment or exam around these busy times. Notifications remind the user of the sessions, and the user can edit or delete sessions as they need to. The app also helps students to focus during these sessions by acting as a Pomodoro timer.

Executive Summary

The usability testing took place between November 24 and November 26 through the TryMyUI testing software. The purpose of the test was to assess whether users were able to quickly add and edit assignments and schedule events within the Schedule Buddy app. Participants were given four tasks requiring them to navigate through two of the major functions of the app.

Eight participants took the test. They had twenty minutes to complete the test but were generally able to complete all of the tasks in approximately five minutes. The longest test session was an outlier at twelve minutes. The next longest test session was only five minutes and twelve seconds. The shortest session was three minutes and fifteen seconds.

Participants found Schedule Buddy to be clean and easy to navigate. However, they found the conflict notification and task re-scheduling mechanism to be confusing, difficult to find, and/or clunky. According to the System Usability Scale (SUS) administered at the end of the test, the app received a usability score of 81.88%, which was in the 90th percentile according to TryMyUI.

The following issues were identified through the test:

- Confusion over the difference between adding a task and adding a schedule event
- Lack of clarity over the difference between a due date and a session
- Confusion over whether an event or schedule had been added or not
- Lack of clarity over when a scheduling conflict occurred, leading to difficulty in fixing the conflict

Methodology
Sessions

For this test, participants were sourced from the University of Colorado at Denver. Participants were contacted in person, through Canvas messaging, and via group messaging. For the in-person test, the participant used the test administrator's computer to minimize confusion over software download and installation instructions. The test link

was sent out to those contacted through Canvas and group messaging. Those participants then took the test at their leisure using their own computers and software.

The participants were given twenty minutes to take the test, but the majority were able to finish it in approximately five minutes or less. The users were first given a short scenario to acclimate themselves to the test environment. Afterwards, they were given a series of tasks to accomplish within the app (see Appendix B). After each task, users were asked to rate the task difficulty on a 7-point scale, with 7 being the easiest.

After finishing the test, the participants were asked four questions about their experience and were given a SUS. The questions asked users to explain what they liked and disliked about the app and provided a space for any additional comments. The SUS asked users to rate things such as ease of use and complexity of the app on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Participants

Participants were pulled from a pool of college students ranging in age from 19 to 35. This was appropriate, since students are the target audience of Schedule Buddy. A total of eight participants took the test over a period of three days: three on 24 November, three on 25 November, and two on 26 November.

Summary of demographics:

- 3 of 8 participants identified as male
- 3 of 8 participants were Android users
- 4 of 8 participants identified as white
- 8 of 8 participants lived in the Denver Metro Area
- 0 of 8 participants used specific calendar apps to organize their schedules

Evaluation Tasks/Scenarios

Schedule Buddy's design team conducted remote user testing of the prototype using TryMyUI.com. The prototype was built on Invision, and then a test of the prototype was created on TryMyUI. The testing software recorded the participant's audio commentary and their actions on the screen. The design team was not present during the testing sessions, but the TryMyUI software recorded the amount of time each participant spent on each provided task and allowed the participants to measure the difficulty of the tasks. After the test was completed, participants answered four questions regarding their experience as well as a short survey. The design team then reviewed their answers and the testing session footage.

In order to test the functionality of the scheduling features, the tasks focused on two main functions of the app: adding/editing tasks and adding schedule events. Test participants had to complete the following tasks:

- Task 1. Add a new task to the calendar
    - Users had to navigate to the icon that allowed them to add a new task due date, enter the information, and save the event so that it could be added to the calendar.

- Task 2. Locate the weekly schedule
  - Users had to open the navigation drawer and select the correct location ("Schedule") from the list of options.
- Task 3. Add a one-time event to your schedule
  - Users had to navigate to the icon that allowed them to add a new schedule event, enter the information, and save the event so that it could be added to their busy schedule.
- Task 4. Resolve a conflict between a task and the new schedule item
  - Users had to recognize that they had a conflict caused by adding their new schedule event (Task 3) and navigate to a page that would allow them to solve the conflict by clicking on the conflicting task and editing the date.

Results

Four Major Takeaways

- Participants did not distinguish between the schedule events, task due dates, and task sessions. Though they were differentiated by distinctive colored dots in several places in the app, participants did not seem to place any importance on the dot color. Two users did not see the difference in function between the Overview page, which summarizes all of the user's combined events, task due dates, and task sessions, and the Schedule page, which only displays the user's schedule events or busy times. This indicates that the participants failed to understand that schedule events and task sessions/due dates are understood as different items within the app. Several users thought that a task session labeled as "Biology Exam Session 1" was the actual exam and not a study session, sometimes leading them to fail Task 4, as they did not believe they could re-schedule a Biology Exam.
- When adding a new task to the calendar, participants tended to first click on the due date on the calendar rather than the "+" icon. This may have been due to the fact that the task text specifically listed the date. Most users were able to find it right away after trying to click on the date and not getting any response. However, one user verbally commented that they found it difficult to see and suggested that it should be more prominent on the page, and another suggested moving the function to also exist on the specific dates as well as in the corner.
- Participants did not differentiate between the Schedule page and the Overview page. This led some users to believe that they could add schedule events from the Overview page, which made them unable to complete Task 3. The original intent of the Schedule page was to have it be where users would enter the busy times during which Schedule Buddy would be unable to add task sessions. This was meant to mostly display a student's recurring weekly schedule, assuming that there wouldn't be drastic changes week to week. However, users instead seemed to interpret it as a weekly view of the Overview page, not realizing that only certain types of items appeared on it.
- Scheduling conflicts were not prominent enough. Though there was a pop-up dialogue alerting the user to the scheduling conflict, many were confused as to where they could find the conflict since the pop-up contained no specific information. Though the date with the conflict was a different color than the other dates on the Overview calendar, most users did not seem to notice the change,

possibly due to the fact that the error color was close to the primary app color. One user suggested that the pop-up should lead you straight to the scheduling conflict. However, the original intent was to allow the user to fix the conflict in their own way by giving them the freedom to navigate to it themselves. Admittedly, there was not enough information given to allow users to easily find the conflict.

Summary of Data

Participants were able to complete Tasks 1 and 2 without issue but found Tasks 3 and 4 challenging to complete. Some participants incorrectly believed they had completed Task 3 due to the flow of the test. The following table shows the actual task completion rates as observed by the Schedule Buddy design team.

Task Completion				
Participant	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
1	√	√		√
2	√	√	√	√
3	√	√		√
4	√	√		√
5	√	√	√	√
6	√	√	√	
7	√	√	√	√
8	√	√	√	
Total Successes	8	8	5	6
Completion Rates	100%	100%	62.5%	75%

Participants were able to complete Tasks 1 and 2 in approximately one minute or less. Most users spent significantly more time working on Task 3, with the majority of time spent on Task 4.

Average Time on Task
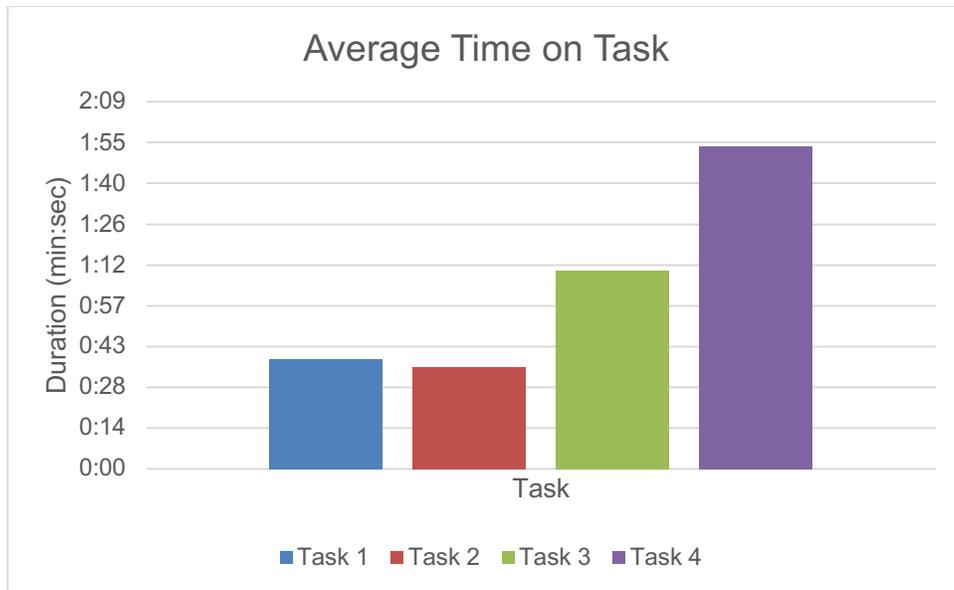
Time on Task				
Tester	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
Avg	**00:39**	**00:36**	**01:18**	**02:07**
1	00:40	00:25	00:43	01:21
2	00:55	01:16	02:28	05:59
3	00:30	00:43	00:50	00:30
4	00:38	00:25	01:05	00:38
5	00:45	00:25	01:07	02:09
6	00:31	00:27	01:40	02:06
7	00:46	00:31	00:28	01:32
8	00:34	00:36	01:04	01:01

After the test session, participants were asked to complete an SUS, rating the usability of the app on a 5-point scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree." The questions alternated between positive and negative questions such that high scores were desired on odd-numbered questions and low scores were desired on even-numbered questions. Below is a table summarizing the results of the SUS.

System Usability Scale						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Avg.
Q1. Would use system frequently		1	1	5	1	3.75
Q2. Found system complex	3	3	1	1		2
Q3. Easy to use			1	2	5	4.5
Q4. Need technical assistance	5	2	1			1.5
Q5. Well integrated			1	4	3	4.25
Q6. Inconsistent	6		2			1.5
Q7. Easy to learn				4	4	4.5
Q8. Awkward	4	2	1	1		1.88
Q9. Confident		1	1	3	3	4
Q10. Needed to learn a lot to get started	5	3				1.38

Based on these results, TryMyUI assigned usability and learnability scores. The app scored an 80.08% and an 89.06% respectively.

Recommendations

Task 1.   Add a new task to the calendar

This task required users to find the function to add a new event to the calendar overview.

Change	Justification	Severity
Add a snackbar that appears after the event has been added to acknowledge that the user has added something and study sessions have been scheduled.	Though users understood that they had accomplished the task, they did not seem to note the changes in the calendar. The snackbar would specify the changes made to make them more apparent to the user.	Low
Highlight the added task and associated sessions after the task has been added.	Again, though users understood that they had accomplished the task, they did not seem to understand what had been added to the calendar after adding the task.	High
Utilize a floating action button to highlight the function to add a new task.	The "+" in the top right corner of the screen did not stand out to users when searching for a way to add a new task. Only two users clicked on it immediately upon reading the task.	Medium

Task 2.   Locate the weekly schedule

This task required users to find the weekly schedule function of the app.

Change	Justification	Severity
Add a "Weekly Schedule" heading to the top.	Users did not seem to understand that this was meant to represent a recurring weekly schedule rather than a weekly view of what was shown on the "Overview" screen.	Medium
Add dates to the days of the week.	The lack of dates made understanding the schedule slightly confusing to users, as the task named a specific date and there were none on the screen. When adding the one-time event, two users audibly wondered what day the 19th was. Afterwards, one user	High

	specifically requested dates being added to the days of the week	

Task 3.   Add a one-time event to your schedule

This task required users to find the function to add a schedule event. It also introduced the possibility of scheduling conflicts.

Change	Justification	Severity
Alter the "+" icon so that users understand that it is meant to only add schedule events.	Users attempted to use the "+" on the "Overview" screen to add a schedule event, not knowing that they served different functions within the app.	High
Create a way to instantly resolve calendar schedule conflicts.	Users did not know what was causing the conflict in their schedule, causing them to attempt to resolve the conflict incorrectly. Rather than forcing users to figure out how to resolve conflicts, the app should introduce a solution that users may choose to reject.	High

Task 4.   Resolve a conflict between a task and the new schedule item

This task required users to identify a conflict on their calendar and re-schedule a task.

| Change	Justification	Severity
Highlight conflicts more clearly on the overview.	Users were unable to figure out which tasks were in conflict.	High
Highlight the difference between task sessions and due dates.	Several users mistook the conflicting task for a task due date, causing them to think they were unable to re-schedule it.	High

Conclusion

This usability test provided great insight on the task and event adding/editing features of Schedule Buddy. Every user commented that Schedule Buddy was easy to navigate, with a clean and cute interface. All participants were able to easily add a new event and navigate to different sections of the app. However, they did not understand the color system within the app to differentiate between the task sessions, task due dates, and schedule events. The fundamental misunderstanding of the difference between these items inhibited some test participants from completing tasks that required adding schedule events and editing tasks. Some participants were also unable to find where to edit schedule conflicts due to the lack of embellishment on those conflicts and the lack of information provided within the app dialogues.

For future iterations of Schedule Buddy, more should be done to differentiate between the sessions, due dates, and schedule events. Additionally, schedule conflict dialogue boxes should either provide more information regarding the conflict, provide a solution to fix the conflict for the user, or lead the user to a location where the conflict can be resolved. Finally, the user experience may improve if there were more acknowledgements of the actions that users take, particularly when adding new tasks to the Overview page, where the dots on the calendar dates may be too small to notice easily.

Appendix

Appendix A. Highlight Reel

https://vimeo.com/303390772
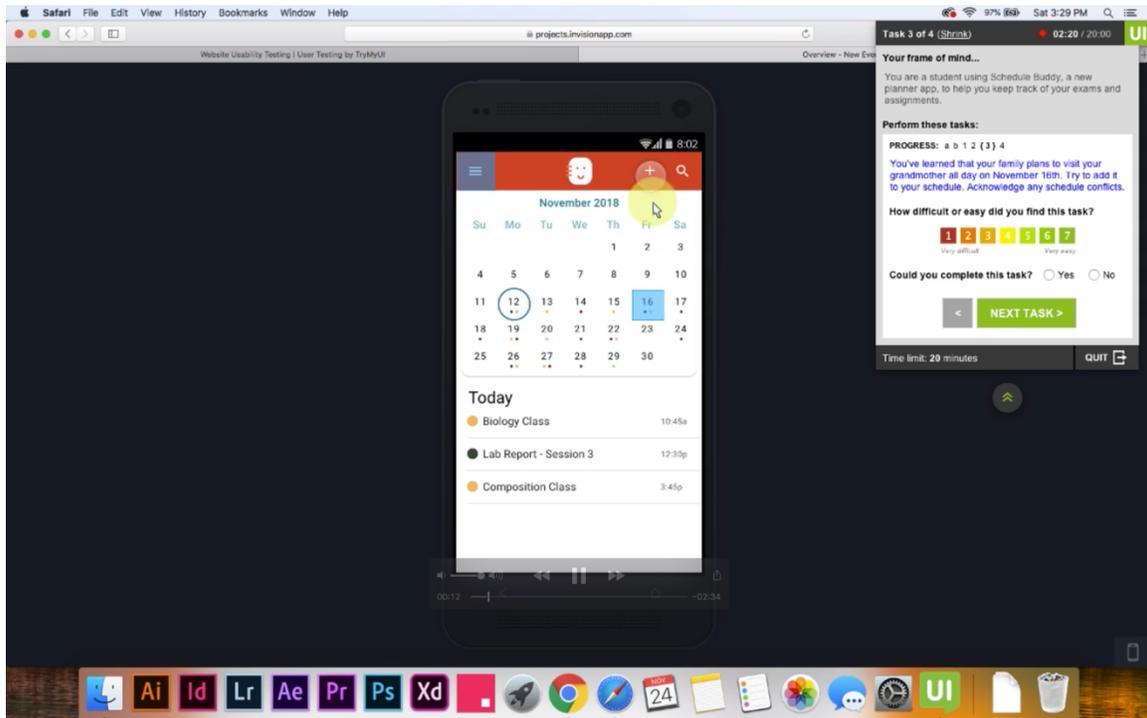
Appendix B. Task Questions

Task 1.   Add a new task to the calendar

You've just learned that you are going to have an exam on November 19th. Try to add it to your calendar so that Schedule Buddy can add some study sessions to your schedule!

Task 2.   Locate the weekly schedule

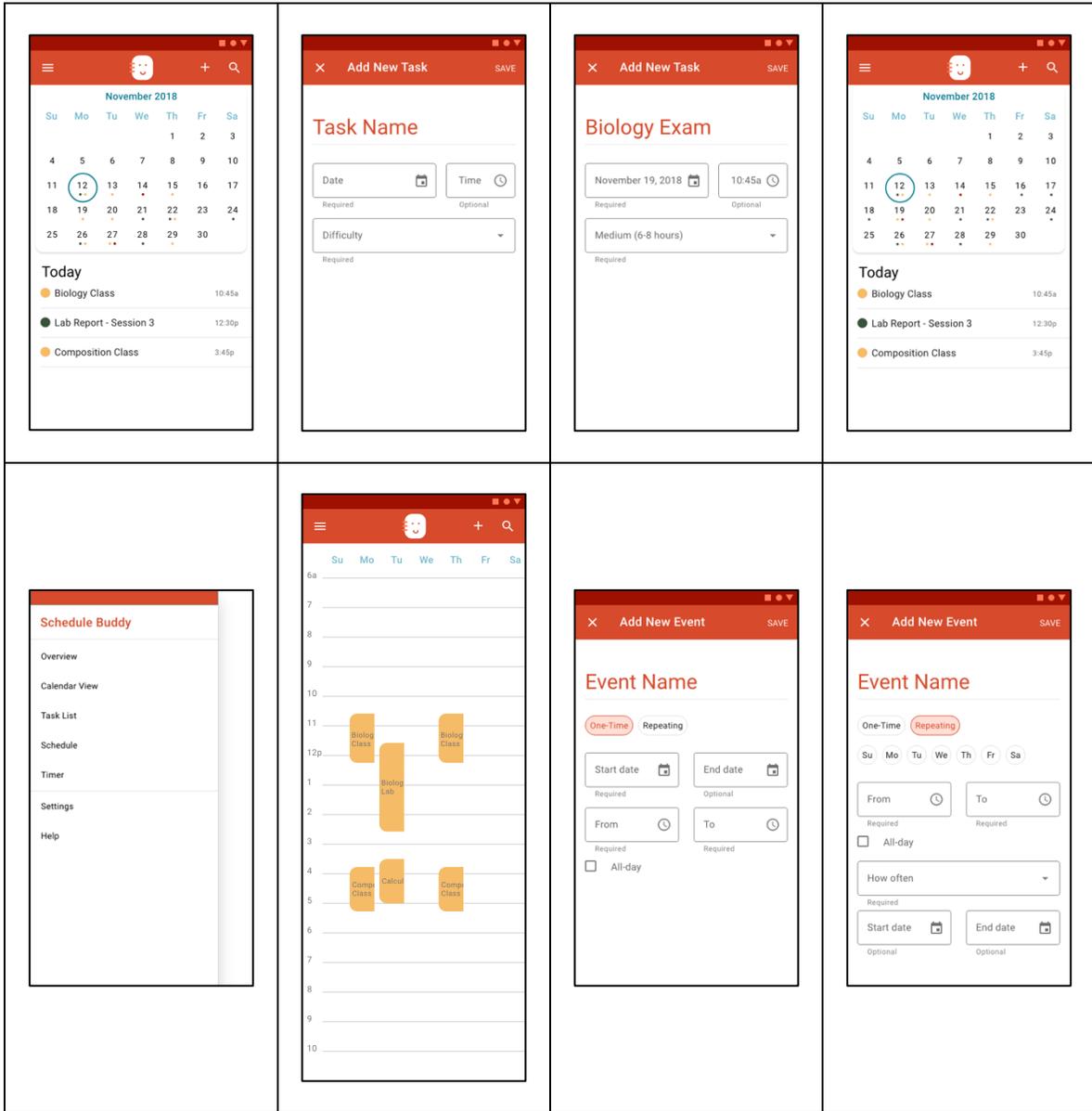What is your weekly schedule like? Navigate to a place where you can view your schedule.

Task 3.   Add a one-time event to your schedule

You've learned that your family plans to visit your grandmother all day on November 16th. Try to add it to your schedule. Acknowledge any schedule conflicts.

Task 4.   Resolve a conflict between a task and the new schedule item

Oh no! Your visit with your grandmother conflicts with your existing schedule. Try to re-schedule your tasks on November 16th to fix the conflict.

Appendix C. High-Fidelity App Screens

Screen 1: Add New Event

× **Add New Event** SAVE

Visit Grandma

One-Time Repeating

| Nov 16, 2018 📅 | End date 📅 |
| Required | Optional |

| From 🕐 | To 🕐 |
| Required | Required |

☑ All-day

Screen 2: Schedule conflict

Schedule conflict

This event interferes with something already on your schedule.

CANCEL OK
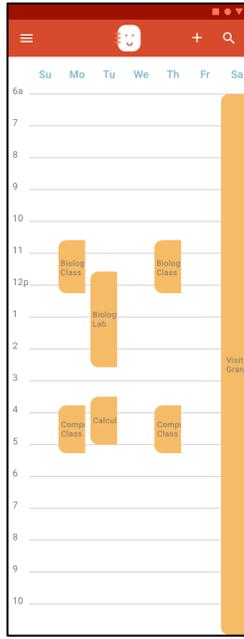
Screen 3: Calendar day view

Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa

6a
7
8
9
10
11
12p — Biology Class, Biology Class, Biology Lab
1
2
3
4
5 — Comp Class, Calcul, Comp Class
6
7
8
9
10

Visit Grand

Screen 4: November 2018 list

November 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Today

● Biology Class   10:45a
● Lab Report - Session 3   12:30p
● Composition Class   3:45p

Screen 5: November 2018 (day selected)

November 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

November 16, 2018

● Visit Grandma   All-day
● Biology Exam - Session 1   12:30p

Screen 6: Edit Task

× **Edit Task** SAVE

Biology Exam Session 1

| Nov 16, 2018 📅 | 12:30 🕐 |
| Required | Optional |

| Medium (6-8 hours) ▾ |
| Required |

DELETE

Screen 7: Edit Task

× **Edit Task** SAVE

Biology Exam Session 1

| Nov 15, 2018 📅 | 12:30 🕐 |
| Required | Optional |

| Medium (6-8 hours) ▾ |
| Required |

DELETE

Screen 8: November 2018 list

November 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Today

● Biology Class   10:45a
● Lab Report - Session 3   12:30p
● Composition Class   3:45p

Today, November 12

Weekly
Biology Class
10:45a - 12:15p

Session 3
Lab Report
12:30p - 2:30p

Weekly
Composition Class
3:45p - 5:15p

November 13

Weekly
Biology Lab
11:30a - 2:30p

Weekly
Calculus I
3:30p - 5:00p

November 14

Due
Lab Report
11:59p

November 15

Weekly
Biology Class
11:45a - 12:15p

Weekly
Composition Class
3:45p - 5:15p

25:00

START

Focus
25:00

Break
5:00

Appendix D. Schedule Buddy Press Release

Lighthouse 101 Guides Students With Schedule Buddy, a New Time Management App

Schedule Buddy provides students with personalized study schedules, assisting students with getting their work done on time!

Lighthouse 101, a leader in education software, has released the best new way to get homework done. Schedule Buddy is a responsive planner app that helps students manage their time and keep track of assignments and tests. Students can tell Schedule Buddy when they have assignments due, and it will suggest a timeline for the student to complete them. Schedule Buddy's timer feature will ensure that students take breaks at the maximal time to prevent fatigue. With Schedule Buddy, students can eliminate the stress of time management and focus on the important things in life.

For busy students, it can be hard to figure out when to make time to study. Planners and calendars may tell us when our assignments are due and when we have exams coming up, but sometimes knowing that things are coming due just isn't enough. Many people have difficulty getting started or planning time to study until their deadlines are already looming over them. Stuck trying to finish everything at the last minute, students end up losing sleep and stressing out, lowering their overall ability to learn and succeed in school.

"As a student, I was always cramming at the last minute before my exams," said Rachel Dormido, designer of Schedule Buddy. "I wished I had something to help me plan out my time better. I hope that Schedule Buddy can help students like me get their projects done on time so they can get more sleep than I did in college!"

Schedule Buddy aims to help people plan their time efficiently by providing customized schedules so that students can space out their assignments and get things done little by little. By avoiding the typical last-minute cram sessions, students can retain information better and improve their grades. Better time management can also help students get more sleep and find more time for the things they enjoy, like pursuing hobbies and hanging out with friends.

"I've tried so many different types of planners and calendars and none of them ever helped," said Mario Lopez, a junior at Duckford University. "Now with Schedule Buddy to help me plan my day, I'm finishing assignments early enough that I can take a day off without worrying about school."

Schedule Buddy is simple and easy! Users will tell Schedule Buddy when they're busy, and it will schedule tasks around those times. When a student gets an assignment or learns that an exam is coming up, they can tell Schedule Buddy when the task is due and how difficult it is, and Schedule Buddy will give provide a plan for finishing the task on time. Schedule Buddy will send notifications to remind students to work according to the provided plan. When a student opens the notification, Schedule Buddy's timer will begin. With built-in breaks, Schedule Buddy prevents students from getting burnt out or overloading. Once the timer finishes, students can tell Schedule Buddy how much progress they made. Depending on their answer, Schedule Buddy will increase or decrease the amount of sessions needed to complete the task.

Schedule Buddy is available for free on Google Play. To get started, go to ScheduleBuddy.com and watch the tutorial!

Appendix E. Signed Informed Consent Forms

6
Title of design project:

Schedule Buddy

You are invited to participate in an interview conducted by **Rachel Dormido** (BFA candidate) at the University of Colorado, Denver, under the supervision of Amara V. Hulslander, Lecturer in the Digital Design program.

This interview seeks to study the usability of a calendar/planner app. This research may help us to understand the viability of the automatic scheduling feature within the planner.

Participation in the study will consist of a remote user test through TryMyUI, which will record your audio as well as your actions on the screen. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

There are no known risks associated with this research. All participant information will remain anonymous and individual results of any kind will remain confidential. Your time and participation is greatly appreciated.

Please contact Rachel Dormido (rachel.dormido@ucdenver.edu) with any questions, concerns, or comments.

I acknowledge that I was informed of the following research project, the way it will be conducted and the conditions of my participation in it. I hereby agree to participate in this research project.

Signature

Printed Name

Undarmaa Bandi

Date

25 NOV 2018

Researcher's signature

Researcher's printed name

Rachel Dormido

Date

25 NOV 2018

6
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Signature _Emmylll._   Printed Name _Emily Weinack_

Date _11-25-18_

Researcher's signature   Researcher's printed name
Rachey QU   _Rachel Dormido_

Date _25 NOV 2018_

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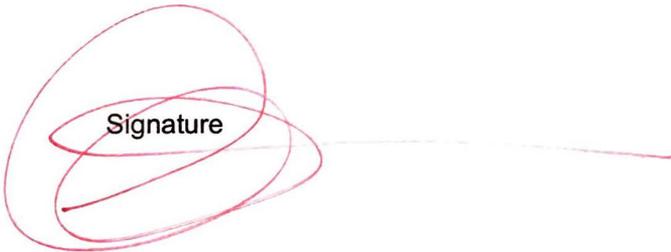
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Signature

Printed Name

Cydney Phan

Date

Nov 26th, 18

Researcher's signature

Researcher's printed name

Rachel Dormido

Date

Nov 26, 2018

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Signature

Printed Name   *Randy Wong*

Date

11/25/18

Researcher's signature

Researcher's printed name   *Rachel Dormido*

Date

25 Nov 2018

6

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Marcelo Cazón

Signature   Printed Name

Date

Researcher's signature   Researcher's printed name

Rachel Dormido

Date

26 NOV 2018

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Signature

Collee

Date

11.26.18

Printed Name

Allison Anderson

Researcher's signature

Rachel Dormido

Date

11/26/18

Researcher's printed name

Rachel Dormido

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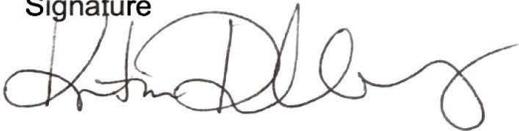
Participation in the study will consist of a remote user test through TryMyUI, which will record your audio as well as your actions on the screen. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

There are no known risks associated with this research. All participant information will remain anonymous and individual results of any kind will remain confidential. Your time and participation is greatly appreciated.

Please contact Rachel Dormido (rachel.dormido@ucdenver.edu) with any questions, concerns, or comments.

I acknowledge that I was informed of the following research project, the way it will be conducted and the conditions of my participation in it. I hereby agree to participate in this research project.
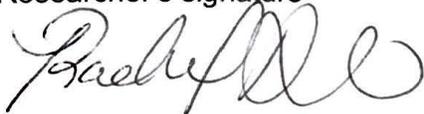
Signature

Date
11/26/2018

Printed Name
Kristina Robbins

Researcher's signature

Date
11/26/2018

Researcher's printed name
Rachel Dormido

Title of design project:

Schedule Buddy

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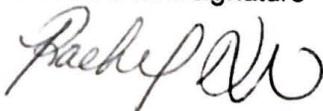
Signature

Printed Name

Ean Petersen

Date

27/NOV/2018

Researcher's signature

Researcher's printed name

Rachel Dormido

Date

24 November 2018