Web-Based Personal Calendar with UIUC Integration

Cognitive Walkthrough

First-time users must spend some time getting used to any system. A couple of the major advantages of our project are automatic synchronization/updates and a very short learning curve. As such, the use of many features should require less thought than when done in existing calendar applications.

Interface

This calendar is an online calendar system. It keeps track of important events all in one place. Some of the features of the calendar include:

- Only for UIUC, requires NetID to sign in.
- Pre-populated with pertinent events.
- Obtains information from Banner.
- Calendar sharing, social network.
- Reminders.

Users

The users of this interface are students at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The calendar is for students who want their lives simplified and organized with one site that easily keeps track of their academic and social calendar.

Actions + Thoughts #1: [Student] Default View and Customization

1. I log in using the familiar NetID and password dialogs.

2. Time slots for all of my classes are already filled in. I can quickly start adding my own events without worrying about overlaps and conflicts. Upcoming assignment due dates are listed as well, so I can decide when and how long to work on them.

3. Since I’m a CS student in Engineering, I see a whole bunch of extra events. I don’t attend a lot of non-CS Engineering events, so I uncheck “Engineering” in the filter list.

4. Right now I’m only concerned with short-term goals, so I choose to view only events and tasks listed within the next week.

5. Nothing prominent has popped up on the page to warn me of an assignment due soon, and I don’t notice any either. This is my home computer, so I’ll stay logged in.

Actions + Thoughts #2: [Instructor] Add Homework Assignment

1. I log in using the familiar NetID and password dialogs.
2. I only want to view the schedule for this one class (e.g., CS 465), so I filter out everything and then tick only the checkbox for “CS 465” in the filter list. My previous setting is automatically saved so I don’t have to worry about what I just undid.

3. After I click the button to add an assignment, the “Class” field has “CS 465” pre-selected. I just attach the PDF that was already written and set a release date, tomorrow; and a due date, a week from tomorrow.

4. That should keep students busy for the next week. I’m done, so I log out by simply clicking a button.

**Actions + Thoughts #3: [Student] Add Friends to a group**

1. I log in using the familiar NetID and password dialogs.

2. I want to add friends to a group so I can be connected with them to invite to events. I click on “Manage Groups” to add a new group.

3. A new page loads with a checklist containing 4 items: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior. The list expands to list all the NetIDs of each category. I want to create a group with all my good friends in the sophomore class. I expand the “Sophomore” list and all the NetIDs of all the Sophomore appears. I select my sophomore friends’ NetIDs.

4. The next section of this page is to create a name for the group. I type in “My Best Friends” as the title. Then I click on “Add new group”.

5. The page reloads back to the homepage with the new group added. Now I want to invite “My Best Friends” to an event…[follow to task #4 step 2].

**Actions + Thoughts #4: [Student] Add event to my social calendar**

Add an event, Party at Joe’s, with time, date, and address to social calendar to be shared with selected friends.

1. I log in using the familiar NetID and password dialogs.

2. I click on “Create New Event” to add a new event on my social calendar.

3. A new page loads with several different fields to describe the event. I add in the name of the event, start and end time, month, day, year, and description of the event through a series of drop down menus. I also want to notify my friends in “my Best Friends” group about the event. I select the appropriate group under the “share events with” field.

4. After all the fields are filed out, I click on “Add Event” button. The original home page loads with the new added event. As well it is added selected friends’ calendar. Under the details of the event, shows if those selected friends are/aren’t attending the event.

5. Nothing prominent has popped up on the page to warn me of an upcoming event, and I don’t notice any either. This is my home computer, so I’ll stay logged in.
Heuristic Evaluation

1. **Validity of system status.**
   - Provide feedback/confirmation when adding new events, calendar, people, and other changes.

2. **Matching between system and real world.**
   - The language used will be straightforward everyday common words.
   - The calendar display will be similar to physical calendars with views like day, week, month, or agenda.

3. **Under control and freedom.**
   - Visual cues to help users easily escape from places.
   - Links that say “go back to the calendar” to cancel current action and return to the homepage.
   - Shortcut links and consistency to give user the ability and freedom to easily navigate the interface without too many clicks and layers.
   - “Today” button to help users return to today’s day in the calendar mode.

4. **Consistency and standards.**
   - The calendar is consistent with other online calendars. There is a similar layout to the calendars, but functions slightly different.
   - Easy to learn with different features making things more catered to students.

5. **Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors.**
   - When there are time conflicts, use none intimidating words.
   - Will not use bright red boxes indicating that there is an error.

6. **Error prevention.**
   - When removing information, pop up appears asking for confirmation.

7. **Recognition rather than recall.**
   - Visual cues to indicate the current date and time.
   - Minimal configuration.
   - Consistent interface with information grouping and in the same space.

8. **Flexibility and Ease of Use.**
   - Obtains information from UIUC Banner.
   - Filters out unwanted categories.
   - View by event type, or social and academic calendar.
   - Views calendar in different modes, day/week/month, to help with the details of everyday planning or the big picture planning.
   - Custom color scheme to personalize.
   - Reminders and alerts that can be sent out.

9. **Aesthetic and Minimalist Design.**
   - Streamlined design using minimal amounts of color to use it as highlights and accent points.
   - Design will be similar to existing calendar designs so it will be easy to learn.

10. **Help and Documentation**
    - “Help” link at the top of every page in the same location.
• This page is broken into two parts. The side bar has information for people who are looking for an overview with several categories. The categories will have a list of related questions/articles that will help novice users. The categories will have short descriptions explaining it. The other section, has list of feature topics and an index of all the articles.

• Article pages are short and concise. There is a brief description followed by instructions/bullet points, and lastly, a list of related topics.