

Apps Expert Review

Tim Sutcliffe

What is a usability expert review?

With a usability expert review, an evaluator uses a product or web site and assesses its usability against a set of principles or best practice guidelines. Expert reviews are popular because they are much quicker and cheaper to carry out than a usability test.

userfocus.co.uk

Expert Review

One Pager

Background: MySpace apps are not performing cf. Facebook regarding churn and installs. It's believed that these performance problems are caused by basic usability issues.

Aim: To provide recommendations that will increase installs and reduce churn of MySpace apps.

Proposal: Review the install, invite and uninstall flows for MySpace apps to look for basic usability issues that may reduce the performance of the platform. Document the flows and provide basic recommendations using standard heuristics and best practice. This project is just a first pass to identify obvious problems.

KPI's: 1. Reduce the churn of apps 2. Increase the number of installs, after marketing of the app has finished.

Expert Review

Initial thoughts (outside of expert review)

Product Brand

Many of the Apps pages don't look very good, general navigation around Apps is confusing and a lot of the apps are of a low quality. I believe this has negatively effected our users perception of apps, leading to a reluctance to engage in any way.

Recommendations

1. Aesthetic overhaul
2. Redesign navigation and flows (See Appendix)
3. Bury bad apps, either using human editor or build rating system

Discovery

The tools we provide to help our users discover apps are not very sophisticated and I believe are limiting the network effect. An invite from someone I don't know feels very spammy. Instead we should rely on '[Social Proof](#)' to propagate apps. I would prefer to hear about apps less often, but in a more prominent place, when an app is 'buzzing' amongst my strong friends.

Recommendations

1. Combined feeds on UHP, and include app recommendations when a certain number of friends are interacting with a particular app (See Appendix)
2. Re-architect folder structure for mail to un-bury app invites

Expert Review

The Heuristics Part 1

1. Concise flows

Can the user complete the task in the minimum number of steps / pages?

Does the flow terminate at an appropriate place once the task is complete?

2. User control and freedom

Do users feel in control of the task they are performing (Does the system behave as expected)?

Do we give the users the tools they need to complete common tasks?

Do we give users the controls they need to recover from an error? E.g. Undo and Redo

3. Flexibility of use

Does the site cater for different types of users (Novice, Advanced, regular, artist, advertiser, promoter etc)?

Do we provide the flexibility / tools for advanced users to speed up interactions for common tasks?

Are users able to tailor the site to their own needs?

4. Visibility of system status & Visual Feedback

Are visual clues provided to the user to help them know;

Where they are in the process

What the system is doing

What they have to do next

What fields are mandatory etc.

5. Aesthetic and minimalist design

Is unnecessary or irrelevant information provided?

Is the layout aligned?

Is there consistent placement of information?

Are there unnecessary graphics?

Are there progressive levels of detail?

Can the user quickly grock the page(i.e. decode the page, take on board information and understand the next steps)

Expert Review

The Heuristics Part 2

6. Consistency and standards

Are ways of performing similar actions consistent?

Are the aesthetics of controls (e.g. button design and link design) consistent?

Is information design consistent (e.g. plain text all looks the same, headers all look the same etc)

7. Match between system and the real world

Does the task utilise metaphors from the real world? (e.g. item list on Amazon to represented as shopping cart)

Is the language simple? Does the language communicate well? Is technical language avoided?

8. Recognition rather than recall

Do we put all the information a user needs to complete a task at the users finger tips; on the page where the task is completed?

Do users have to remember information from one part of the system to the other?

9. Error prevention & Recovery

Do we actively prevent user errors ?

Do we support users is rapidly recovering from an error?

Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

10. Help and documentation

Is help and other information provided to guide new users, and can it be easily searched and followed?

Colour Coding of comments fro Expert Review

Contributes to poor
UE

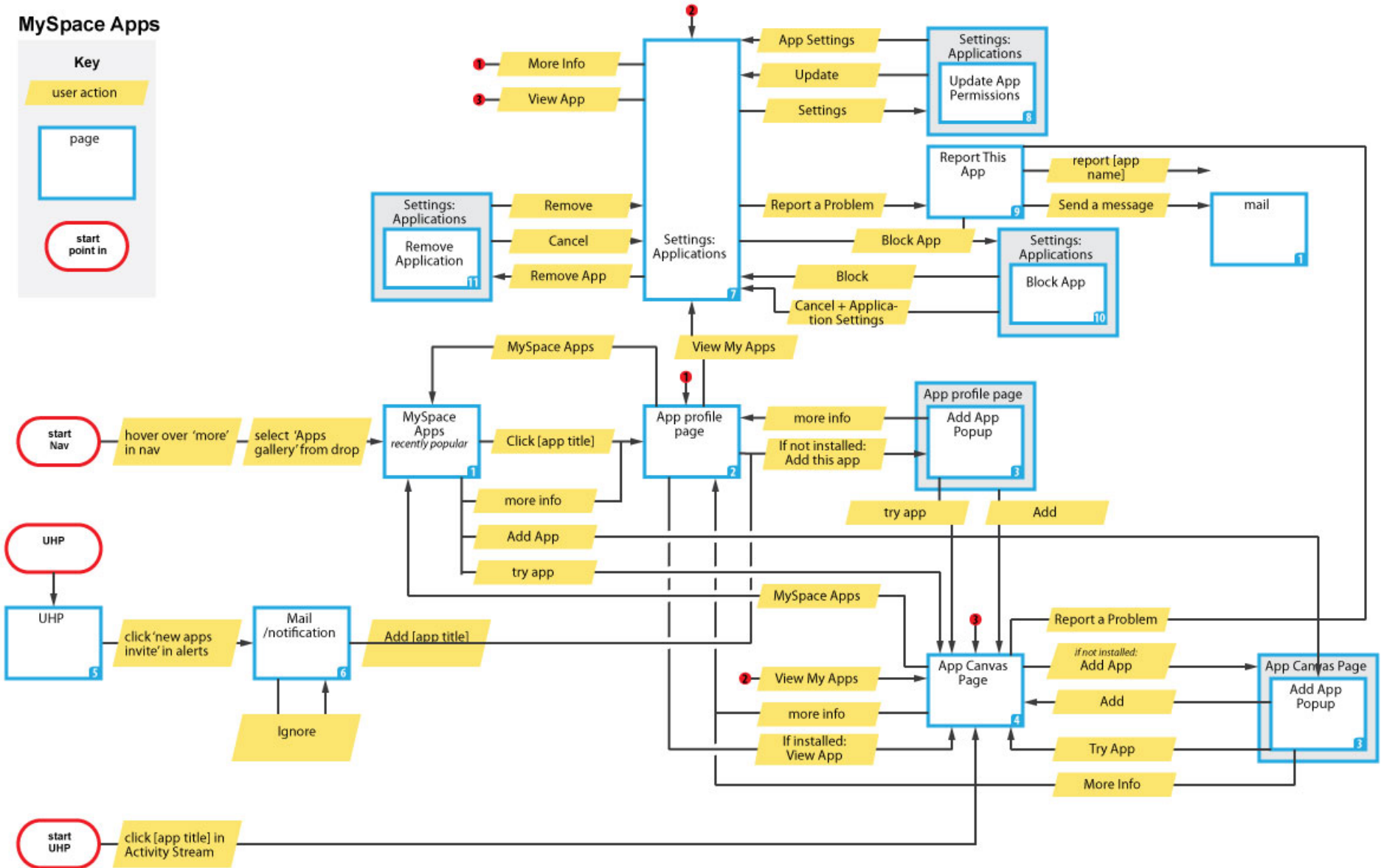
Significant cause of
poor UE

Must be changed to reduce App
churn and increase app installs

Expert Review

The Review

MySpace Apps



Page 1: MySpace Apps

Apps shouldn't have its own logo – This dilutes the master brand.

Title should be 'Apps Gallery' to match title in Nav.

Apps gallery should have a few lines explaining what apps are – the 'soft sell'

Are we using Apps or Applications. We should stick to a convention across all pages. I like Apps and it's now the industry standard.

Need a consistent design for sub nav across site

Technical language alert. Try 'Choose language'. Better still, have checkbox which allows user to 'only show apps in [user's culture]'

For Alphabetical view, paging should be alphabetical, not numeric.

Need to follow consistent aesthetic for module, module headers etc across site.

Search button shouldn't use play icon

Align 'no results' page. (ps, where did the Google adds go? Brilliant)

Should link to App profile Page with Add App popup.

Search should use main MySpace search for consistent interface.

Search should have spelling suggestions and also other suggestions

Add App button needs to follow site standard.

The screenshot shows the MySpace Apps page layout. At the top is a navigation bar with links for Home, Mail, Profile, Friends, and a search bar. Below the navigation bar is the 'MySpace Apps' header. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar with a 'Filter By' section (listing categories like Animals & Pets, Automotive, etc.) and a main list of applications. The first application is 'Mafia Wars' by Zynga, followed by 'Mobsters' by Playdom. A search bar is located on the right side of the main content area. At the bottom, there is a 'no results' message. Annotations are placed over the page, pointing to specific elements and providing feedback. The annotations are in yellow and green speech bubbles. The yellow ones point to the title, the 'Are we using Apps or Applications' question, the alphabetical view, the 'no results' page, the search bar, and the 'Add App' button. The green ones point to the 'Apps shouldn't have its own logo' comment, the 'Technical language alert', the 'Search button shouldn't use play icon', and the 'Align no results page' comment.

Page 2: App Profile Page

The image is a screenshot of a MySpace App page for an application named 'BMX Extreme'. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links for 'Friends', 'Music', 'Video', and 'More'. Below this is a section for 'MySpace Apps' with a search bar and a 'View My Apps' link. The main content area features a large image of a person on a bicycle, a 'Made by Vipin' badge with '12001 active users', and a 'Categories' section with 'Games' selected. A prominent 'Add this App' button is visible. The page also includes a 'Report this App' link and a 'Forum' section at the bottom.

Annotations on the page include:

- Top Left:** A green callout box stating, "Apps shouldn't have it's own logo – This dilutes the master brand." pointing to the 'MySpace Apps' logo.
- Top Right:** A yellow callout box stating, "This link should be called 'Apps Gallery'" pointing to the 'View My Apps' link.
- Center:** A red callout box stating, "We need to develop a naming convention to help the user understand the difference between the App profile page and the app canvas page. I found it massively confusing. Try 'App Info Page' and 'App Home Page'?" pointing to the app's profile information.
- Bottom Left:** A yellow callout box stating, "Poor page layout / design damages product brand. Users perceive that good looking interfaces are easier to use – [read more here](#)" pointing to the app's main image.
- Bottom Center:** A yellow callout box stating, "Headers & modules must follow style guide." pointing to the app's header area.
- Bottom Right:** A red callout box stating, "This button should follow the style guide. We should also test using yellow button. The module this button sits in must look better." pointing to the 'Add this App' button.
- Far Right:** A yellow callout box stating, "If we're going to have a 'try app' feature, the button should be from this screen and not from the 'Add App Popup' (pg3 or pg12)" pointing to the 'Add this App' button.

Page 3: Add App Popup

The image shows a screenshot of the MySpace website with an 'Add App' popup open. The popup is for an app called 'BMX Extreme'. The background shows the MySpace interface with a navigation bar and a sidebar. Several callout boxes with colored borders provide design feedback on the popup.

Facebook
Allowing Who Has The Biggest Brain? access will let it access your Profile information, photos, your friends' info and other content that it requires to work.

Can we determine the success rate of a user adding an app from this page – very important to know

Lose the logo – it just adds to visual noise

The Add Options asks a lot of questions that might put the unsure off. Can we just summarise the defaults, like Facebook?

'try app' and 'more info' should be removed. The user has just been on the 'more info' page so it's a little recursive, and 'try app' should be a button on the info page, next to 'install app'

Layout could be improved – horizontal rather than vertical column would look better

This button must follow style guide, and could be yellow

The logo and the info are duplicated from the previous screen, therefore redundant. We must have a clean and minimal design on the popup

BMX Extreme

Add Options:

- ☒ Add this app to my profile
- ☒ Update my friends that I've added this app

This app will have access to your display name, public photo(s) and friends list.

Log In

Add

Page 4: App Canvas page

We need to develop a naming convention to help the user understand the difference between the App profile page and the app canvas page. I found it massively confusing. Try 'App Info Page' and 'App Home Page'?

🎮 Bowling Buddies - [More Info](#) | [Report a Problem](#)

[MySpace Apps](#) | [View My Apps](#)

The screenshot displays the 'Bowling Buddies' app canvas. On the left, a vertical sidebar includes a 'playfish' logo and buttons for 'SUPPORT', 'FORUM', 'INVITE', 'POST TO BULLETIN', and 'CLICK TO PLAY:'. Below these are 'WORD CHALLENGE' and a house icon. The main area features a cartoon character holding a blue bowling ball, with large buttons for 'Challenge', 'Practice', 'Invite' (showing 4 friends playing), and 'Shop' (showing 355 items). At the bottom, there's a 'Challenge Requests (1/5)' section with a user named 'Mitch' and 'Yes/No' buttons. On the right, a sidebar shows 'No friends invited yet!' with 'Select all', 'Clear all', and 'Invite!' buttons, followed by a grid of friend profile pictures and names like 'the', 'joe', 'adam', 'the', 'kelly', and 'tom'. A yellow callout box points to the right sidebar with the text: 'Need a consistent design for sub nav across site'.

Page 5: UHP

The image is a screenshot of a Myspace user profile for 'Gonzo Tim'. The page has a blue header with a broadband and phone offer. Below the header is a navigation bar with links to Home, Mail, Profile, Friends, Music, Video, and More. The main content area shows the user's name, a status update, and an activity stream. There are several callout boxes with red and green borders providing feedback on the design.

Get our broadband and phone Essential
£6.49 a month [Click here](#)
Line rental £11.25 a month. Subject to availability and minimum term contract. Full terms and conditions at talktalk.co.uk

myspace™

Home Mail Profile Friends Music Video More

Hello Gonzo Tim!
My U [Edit Profile](#)

Status and Mood

What are you doing right now?

Gonzo Tim Can you solve 2 Rubicks cubes and play Mr Crowley on Guitar Hero with your elbow, simultaneously ? mm? This kid can can <http://lnk.ms/04x3f> 3 hours ago
Mood: not jet-lagged

[view more](#) | [comment](#)

Lindsay is loving friday 4 hours ago

Alerts

- New Videos!
- New Blog Posts!
- New App Invites!
- New Status Comments!

Activity Stream

Today [edit settings](#) | [view all updates](#)

- Timtest Two added the Own Kittens app.
- Timtest Two added the Mafia Wars app.

My Apps

Hand picked apps just for you. Check out our [Editor's Picks!](#)

- Gravity Mouse
- Word Challenge
- tiny piranha
- Turkey Attack
- luis launch
- What Billy Mays Product Are You?
- Under Cover

[manage apps](#) | [view all](#)

CHARLIE DARK'S LONDON

First line of module, 'Hand picked apps for you' confused users about the purpose of module.

This counter should display the total number of items in mail, including invites

Icons too small to grock – remove them as they just add to visual clutter.

Layout could be improved. Also follow styleguide re colour schemes.

App invites are only explicitly surfaced through alerts box – below the fold.
Apps feature in activity steam (below the fold). Status and Mood and Activity Stream should be rolled together.

Page 6: Mail notification

All mail types should increment the counter

App invites are buried under Mail Centre> Notifications. IA of mail is confusing – why are notifications under Mail Centre, but the Inbox is not?

Tiny icons are not good at communicating notification type – have users really learnt what icon means what? Clear headers would be better.

Add counters to these folders to alert users to new items

Layout is not very balanced

Why is 'Add [app name]' and 'Ignore' a button and 'Block this App' a link?

I want to see my Experian credit report because: (please select below)

It's FREE... >

I'm just curious to see it >

I have been turned down for credit >

I want to improve my credit rating >

I am applying for a mortgage >

I am applying for a loan >

I'm worried about ID theft >

FREE CREDIT REPORT >

Become an elite personal trainer
**Start a successful
career today**

Page 7: Settings - Applications

User Clicks on 'MyApps' and ends up here on 'Settings: Applications'. Try 'Settings: My Apps' or 'My Account Settings: Apps'

These links are redundant and should be removed . Our users should be encouraged to use the Site Nav

Settings: Applications

No need for
Logo

Subnav should follow current standard

[View My Profile](#)
[Edit Profile](#)

[Contact](#) | [Password](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Spam](#) | [Notifications](#) | [Applications](#) | [MySpaceID](#) | [IM](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Miscellaneous](#)

The currently selected tab
should be highlighted

Apps I've Added

The layout could be improved - Generally we should avoid centrally aligned layouts.

Happy Flickr

[Settings](#) | [View App](#) | [More Info](#)
[Report a Problem](#) | [Block App](#) | [Remove App](#)

Access to private photos and videos disabled.

TFL Service Updates

[Settings](#) | [View App](#) | [More Info](#)
[Report a Problem](#) | [Block App](#) | [Remove App](#)

Profile module disabled.
Home module disabled.
Activity Stream publishing disabled.
Access to private photos and videos disabled.

Texas Holdem Poker

[Settings](#) | [View App](#) | [More Info](#)
[Report a Problem](#) | [Block App](#) | [Remove App](#)

Profile module disabled.
Access to private photos and videos disabled.

Bowling Buddies

[Settings](#) | [View App](#) | [More Info](#)
[Report a Problem](#) | [Block App](#) | [Remove App](#)

Profile module disabled.
Home module disabled.
Access to private photos and videos disabled.

Page 8: Settings – Update App Permissions

No need for
Logo

Update App Permissions

Happy Flickr



Appears On:

- ☒ Profile
- ☒ Homepage

This app

- ☐ View my personal info & details
- ☐ View my profile interests & companies
- ☐ View my private photos & videos
- ☒ Receive notifications from this app
- ☒ Receive email about this app
- ☐ Send me SMS messages to my phone
- ☐ Allow this app to upload photos.
- ☒ Update my friends on my activities
- ☒ Receive activity updates from this app
- ☐ Automatically publish activity updates from this app

This app will have access to your display name, public photo(s) and friends list. You can remove this app and not share this info from [App Settings](#).

This app was not developed by MySpace.

Update

Follow styleguide re buttons

Texas Holdem Poker

[Settings](#) | [View App](#) | [More Info](#)
[Report a Problem](#) | [Block App](#) | [Remove App](#)

Bowling Buddies

[Settings](#) | [View App](#) | [More Info](#)
[Report a Problem](#) | [Block App](#) | [Remove App](#)

!Don't Press the Button!

Page 9: Report this App

Become an elite personal trainer
Start a successful career today

training room
personal trainer academy

Status: Gonzo Tim is
Mood: detail-oriented (Update)

People Search

My Account Sign Out

MySpace Apps

Report this App

Happy Flickr

Created By: **Happiness**

I have a suggestion for this app encountered a problem while using it:
Suggestions, feature requests, and bug reports should be sent to the app developer.
[Send message to Happiness.](#)

I don't want to receive any more information from this app
You can block specific apps for any reason. You will no longer receive information from this app. Conversely, you will no longer be able to access your information from this app. You can unblock apps from your Account Settings.
[Block Happy Flickr.](#)

This app could be a violation of MySpace terms and needs to be investigated by MySpace:
If this app is doing something that is evil, you can report it to MySpace for investigation.
[Report Happy Flickr.](#)

No need for Logo

The user clicked on 'Report a Problem' and arrives at a page called 'Report this App'. Rename this page 'Report a Problem'

Difficult to grock page, due to long bold headers and shorted body text.

Add a line of introductory text encouraging users to help improve the service by giving feedback. This will improve goodwill towards our site.

Consistency of controls: some links are bold and others are not,

Don't concede that anything evil can happen on MySpace.

Page 10: Block this App

The popup title should be called 'Block App'

No need for
Logo

Alignment?

Drop link 'more info' –
superfluous to user needs


Block

Cancel

Follow styleguide re buttons

Happy Flickr

Are you sure you want to block this app?

 Happy Flickr
Happy Flickr you do not have access to Flickr.com if you block this app.
[more info](#)

Once Blocked:

- You will not receive any invites or communications from this app in the future.
- This app will not be able to access any of your info.
- If you currently have this app installed, it will be uninstalled.

You can unblock an app in [Applications Settings](#) at any time.




myspace™

Home Mail

Settings: Application

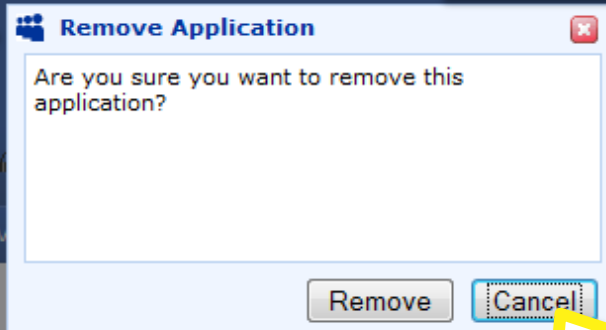
Contact Info | Account | Password

Apps I've Installed

	Happy Flickr Settings View App More Info Report a Problem Block App Remove App	
	TFL Service Updates Settings View App More Info Report a Problem Block App Remove App	Profile module disabled. Home module disabled. Activity Stream publishing disabled. Access to private photos and videos disabled.
	Texas Holdem Poker Settings View App More Info Report a Problem Block App Remove App	Profile module disabled. Access to private photos and videos disabled.
	Bowling Buddies Settings View App More Info Report a Problem Block App Remove App	Profile module disabled. Home module disabled. Access to private photos and videos disabled.
	!Don't Press the Button!	Access to private photos and videos disabled.

Page 10: Block this App

No need for
Logo



Follow styleguide re buttons



Status: Gonzo Tim is
Mood: detail-oriented

Home Mail Profile Friends Music

People

Search

POWERED BY
Google

My Account

Sign Out

Settings: Applications

View My Profile
Edit Profile

Contact Info | Account | Password | Privacy | Spam | Notifications | Applications | MySpace

Miscellaneous

Apps I've Added



Happy Flickr

Settings | View App | More Info
Report a Problem | Block App | Remove App

Access to private photos and videos disabled.



TFL Service Updates

Settings | View App | More Info
Report a Problem | Block App | Remove App

Profile module disabled.
Home module disabled.
Activity Stream publishing disabled.
Access to private photos and videos disabled.



Texas Holdem Poker

Settings | View App | More Info
Report a Problem | Block App | Remove App

Profile module disabled.
Access to private photos and videos disabled.



Bowling Buddies

Settings | View App | More Info
Report a Problem | Block App | Remove App

Profile module disabled.
Home module disabled.
Access to private photos and videos disabled.

!Don't Press the Button!

Access to private photos and videos disabled.

Appendix

Appendix

Discovery through social proof

Social proof, also known as **informational social influence**, is a psychological phenomenon that occurs in ambiguous social situations when people are unable to determine the appropriate mode of behavior.

In this case it's more likely a user will install app if they see a herd of their friends are installing it or using it, than if they are just invited to use to by one 'friend' who is incentivised to send out invites for a reward.

The screenshot shows a MySpace profile page. On the left is a profile picture of a sailboat on water. Below it, statistics show 'Profile Views: 1,895' and 'Last Login: 18/08/09'. There are links for 'Photos: Edit | Upload' and 'Videos: Edit | Upload', along with 'Manage Calendar' and 'Manage Blog'. The main content area is titled 'Today on your MySpace'. It features a post from 'Jess' who is 'fence-tastic!' and 'happy', with links to 'view more', 'comment', and 'message'. Below this, a red dashed box highlights a notification: '3 of your friends installed Texas Hold'em Poker this week' with a 'CALL' button and a 'more info' link. Another notification below that says 'Jennifer Zweben added 16 new photos to the hawaii9-0 album.' with four photo thumbnails. A second red dashed box highlights another notification: '2 of your friends are playing Bowling Buddies right now' with a 'PLAY!' button and a 'more info' link. On the right side of the page, there is a large pink advertisement for T-Mobile with the text 'minutes. Unlimited texts For £20 credit on Pay as you go' and a 'Get a free SIM' button. Below the ad is a section titled 'People You May Know' showing a profile for '天天 愛我 ジカル ...' (23 / female, Taiwan).

Appendix

Nav / Install Flow 1

Concept
Visual Only

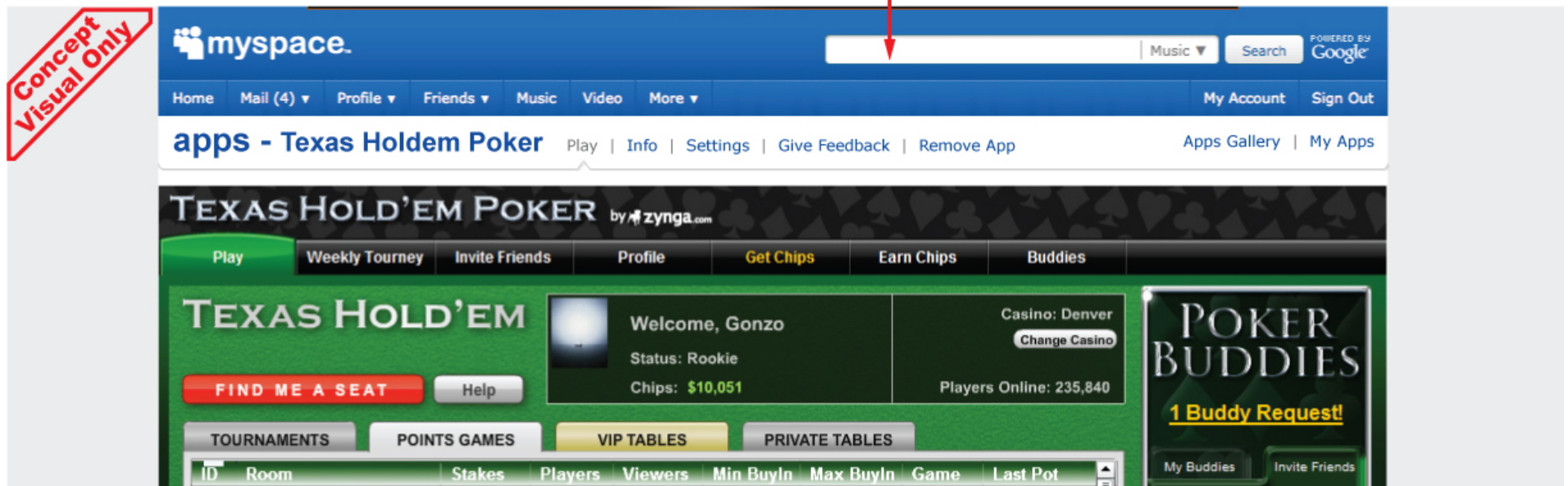
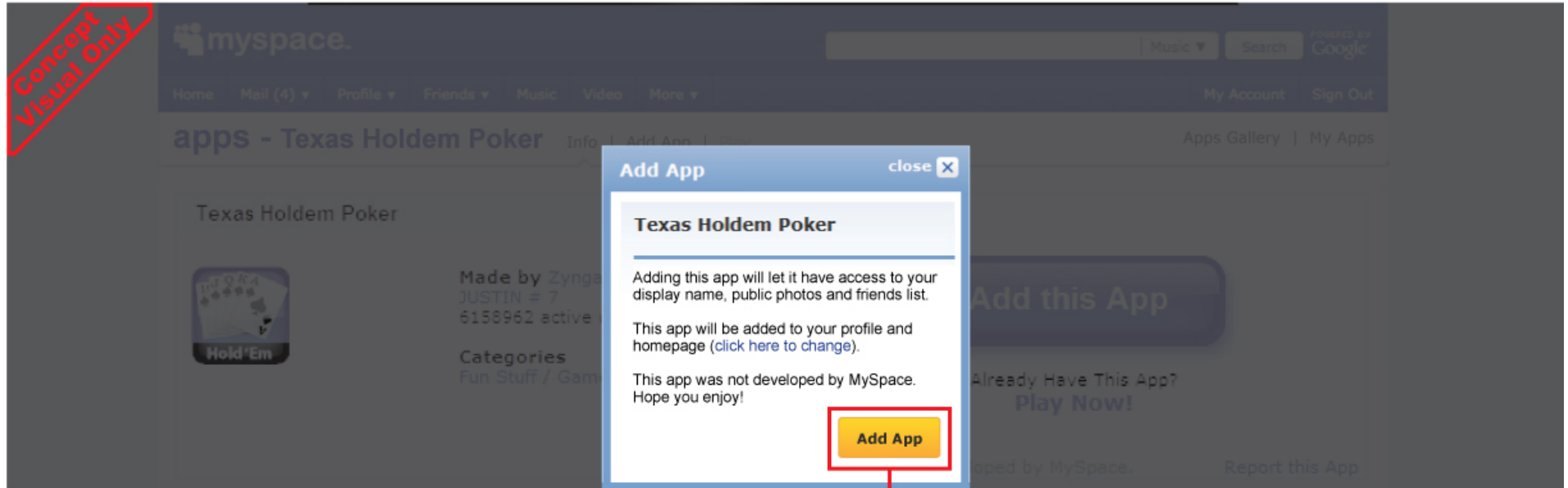
The screenshot shows the MySpace Apps Gallery interface. At the top is the MySpace navigation bar with links for Home, Mail (4), Profile, Friends, Music, Video, and More. On the right are links for My Account and Sign Out. Below the navigation bar is the 'apps' section with a search bar and a 'Search Apps' button. On the left, there are filters for 'Filter By' (Language: All Languages) and 'App Categories' (All Applications, Editor's Pick, Animals & Pets, Automotive, Communicating). The main content area displays 'All Applications' with sorting options: Alphabetical, Most Users, Newest, and Recently Popular. It shows a list of apps, with 'Texas Hold'em Poker' by Zynga highlighted. The app's description says 'Play FREE with your friends in MySpace's biggest poker game!! Don't forget your daily bonus.' To the right, there are 'Sponsored Links' for 'Aphex Twin' and 'It's Warp Records 20th'.

Concept
Visual Only

The screenshot shows the MySpace app page for 'Texas Hold'em Poker'. The navigation bar is the same as the previous screenshot. Below it, the page title is 'apps - Texas Hold'em Poker' with links for 'Info' and 'Add App'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column shows the app's icon (a hand of cards) and details: 'Made by Zynga, ♡ JUSTIN # 7 6158962 active users' and 'Categories Fun Stuff / Games'. The right column features a large blue button labeled 'Add this App' with a yellow starburst graphic saying '\$1,000 Chips Free!'. Below the button, it says 'Already Have This App? Play Now!'. At the bottom, there is a disclaimer: 'This app was not developed by MySpace.' and a link to 'Report this App'.

Appendix

Nav / Install Flow 2



Appendix

Mail Folder Structure

The screenshot displays the Myspace Mail interface. At the top, the Myspace logo and user status are visible. The navigation bar includes links for Home, Mailbox (14), Profile, Friends, Music, Video, and More. A callout box highlights the Mailbox (14) dropdown menu, which contains the following options: Messages (6), Notifications (8), Compose, Friend Requests, Sent Mail, Saved Mail, and Address Book. A red diagonal banner with the text "Concept Visual Only" is overlaid on the right side of the interface.

Below the navigation bar, the "mail" logo is displayed. The left sidebar contains a "Compose Message" button and a list of mail folders: At a glance, Messages (6) (with sub-folders: Inbox (6), Drafts, Saved, Trash), Notifications (8) (with sub-folders: App Invites (4) empty, Event Invites (2) empty, Photo Tags (2) empty, Friend Requests), Address Book, and Settings.

The main content area is titled "Notifications" and shows a list of notifications. The first notification is from Drew, stating "Drew sent you an event invitation:". The event details are as follows:

- Testing event owner
- Sunday, 16 August 2009**
- Time: 15:06**
- US**
- Thsi should add me as the owner

The notification is dated 16 Jul 2009, 15:10. Below the notification, there are buttons for "Attending", "Not Attending", "Maybe", and "Ignore".