

Flickr Organizr User Personas & Scenarios

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About the Flickr Organizr

Flickr is an online photosharing web site with many features that support social networking. The Flickr Organizr is a tool for organizing photos in several different ways through batch operations.

General Functionality

Flickr users can upload images to the web, supplying their own title, description, tags, and even geotagging. Flickr users can then organize their images into sets of photos and submit them to pools of photos from a group of users. Users comment on photos, mark others' images as favorites, add tags and notes to their own and others' photos, and engage in threaded forum discussions in user groups.

Flickr Organizr functionality allows individual and batch changes to photos. These functions include adding tags, creating and editing sets, rearranging the display order of sets, adding images to groups, viewing the images in a group, and editing properties of individual photos.

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Laura

Personal Description

Laura is a 34-year-old artist who manages an oil painting gallery in Seattle where she lives with her husband Frank. She has a degree in fine arts and recently convinced her husband to remodel their house to include a studio and gallery space for her artwork. She owns a Dell notebook that she uses to browse the Internet and store media. She is cautious about changing its the software and refuses to download new programs. Laura depends on her notebook for notes and ledgers from her gallery but keeps paper copies just in case.



Technological Resources

Laura has used the Internet for most of her professional life and is familiar with many productivity software packages. She has a cable Internet connection at home and enjoys browsing her favorite art sites every morning with her coffee before heading to the gallery. Laura owns an old Canon PowerShot S250 camera for photos of her artwork to show her peers, but is hoping to upgrade soon her husband decides on a SLR model they can share. Laura is confident with the applications she knows, but she often calls Frank for help troubleshooting error messages in Windows XP.

Flickr Use

Laura began using Flickr about six months ago; she initially received an email from her father containing a link to a Flickr photoset from his vacation to the Bahamas. After receiving several other Flickr links from her friends, she registered an account in order to browse their private photos. While Laura has no photos uploaded of her own, she is a member of several Flickr groups that showcase local painting and artwork in Seattle.

Tasks

Laura uses Flickr mostly to view relatives' vacation photos and to browse and comment on friends' photographs of their artwork. Lately, she has begun using Flickr's map feature to browse her local area for fellow artists and recently joined a few groups pertaining to local art communities.

Problems

Laura lacks the motivation to upload her own photographs and currently only enjoys "lurking" in the Flickr community. She has had frustrations in the past adding friends as contacts and until she was shown how, she had relied on a text file to jot down usernames of her Flickr friends.

Desires

Laura wishes to share photos of her paintings with her friends and family but is shy about posting her work online and has concerns about privacy. She has recently begun scanning her film photos in preparation for making sets and plans on uploading them once her husband shows her a way to post more than a few photos at a time.

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Sara

Personal Description

Sara is a 26-year-old PhD student in physics. She finished her undergraduate study at 22 and worked in the energy industry for two years, but she didn't really enjoy it, so she decided to go into academia. She lives with her boyfriend Patrick in Austin, Texas, in a rented off-campus apartment. She drives her hand-me-down Kia Spectra to school on weekdays and does grocery shopping and homework on weekends.



Technological Resources

Sara has been using computers and the Internet for over 10 years and has owned an IBM T40 for three years. She's online with a cable connection almost every day from morning to night for schoolwork as well as her personal life. She does limited programming and uses some specialized software for research. Besides that, she uses the basic functions of an older version of Photoshop. She also frequently uses email and IM and does quite a lot of online shopping.

Flickr Use

Sara has used Flickr for one year now; her boyfriend introduced it to her and recently gave her a gift upgrade to a Pro account so she could have more than two sets for her travel photos. She owns a Casio EX-S600 camera because it is convenient to carry around. She is not a photographer, but she enjoys bringing back a lot of pictures from her travels to post on Flickr to share with friends and currently has 387 photos posted in nine sets and three groups. She has five contacts that she added because she likes their photos, and has seven friends, who are friends of hers in real life. She likes checking their photos to know how things are going with them. Also, it's a good place to share and organize her travel photos; it would be hard to switch since her photos are already there and her friends use Flickr, and there's not much to complain about. She likes that people don't need to sign in to look her photos.

Tasks

Sara uses Flickr mostly for organizing and sharing her travel pictures, but she is considering putting up other pictures too. She checks for new comments and new pictures from friends two or three times a week. Sometimes she looks for pictures from a certain city as a travel guide and uses the Explore area of Flickr once in a while to see interesting pictures.

Problems

Sara uses most of the basic functions like sets, groups, tags, and comments, which she finds self-explanatory, but she's had a hard time figuring out more advanced functions like maps and geotagging. She doesn't really spend time exploring other features unless it's necessary.

Desires

Sara doesn't really have a specific desire for any additional functions, but thinks it would be nice if she could edit photos and upload more photos at one time.

Scenario for Sara

It's 2:39pm on a Wednesday. It's unusually cold in Austin today, as much of the winter has been, and Sara wakes up about an hour and a half before her next class. Today it's environmentally sustainable business practices, her favorite class this semester, really interesting but not a whole lot of work. Looking out of the window, she puts on her slippers and notices the weather is gloomy again. Her boyfriend Patrick left for work at 8am and will be home in a few hours, so she washes the dishes and starts to boil water for tea. After fixing a nice cup of tea, Sara sits down in front of the computer, but as she sits down, she gets a static electricity shock from the steel folding chair and makes a mental note to not shuffle her slippers on the carpet. After taking a moment to recover from the surprise of the static shock, she looks down and notices that she spilled some tea on her class notes. The pattern of the tea makes a smiley face, resulting in a blotchy inky smiley face on her notes.

Sara is terribly amused by the smiley face and wants to share the experience with her friends; she gets up, wondering where she left her camera. After looking through her desk and under the bed, she remembers that she left the camera in her travel backpack, left there after a recent backpacking trip to Bozeman, Montana. Sara retrieves the camera and takes a picture of the wet, wrinkled, inky smiley face. She takes a few photos, one as a zoomed in photo, a wide-angle shot showing the context of the notes, and one wide angle shot without the flash. The camera uses a memory card that her model T40 can read so Sara moves the memory card from the camera and into the side of her laptop.

She then turns on the laptop bringing it out of a sleep state, and launches iTunes so that she can listen to music while uploading her photos. She now has about an hour before her next class. Sara opens the disk that contains the images, finds the images and drags them onto her desktop. After opening all three images with the Windows image browser, she selects her favorite image and opens that image with Photoshop CS2. Once Photoshop loads and she opens her image she uses the "Auto Levels" and "Auto Colors" functions under the Image menu, a trick that she learned from her boyfriend. After adjusting the colors, she crops the image slightly to cut out a portion of the image that was irrelevant to the moment. Sara then saves the image on her desktop, replacing the original photo.

Sara closes Photoshop and opens the Firefox web browser. She knows from experience that when she has both applications open at the same time it slows her computer down to a crawl. As the browser starts to load her home page, she pulls down the Favorites menu and selects Flickr. In the past she has selected, "Remember me on this Computer" checkbox, so she no longer has to log in. She notices that she has new comments, so she checks who left comments on her photographs. It was just Jean-Paul, a classmate, commenting on her trip to Bozeman. Quickly, she also checks if there are new photos by her contacts. Seeing that there was nothing terribly interesting, she goes back to her Flickr home page and uploads her photo. Excited for her contacts to see the new image, she notices her sets at the side of the page and thinks that the photo should be included in the "Life is like a box of chocolates" set. She clicks on the Organize tab and launches Organizr. She's greeted with a blank screen; realizing she has to do something, she figures out that she needs to see her list of sets. Sara clicks on the "Your Sets" tab and all of the sets are listed in the working space. She drags her new image from the Findr into the "Life is like a box of chocolates" set. A dialogue box appears confirming that the photo has been added to the set, and asks if she would like to open the set. Sara reads the message and clicks on the blue Open Set button. She's so proud of the photo that she decides to make it the preview image for the set, so she drags the image from within the set into the left hand side of the screen into the set icon box. The new image is in place for the preview icon and Sara clicks the Save button and closes the browser. There's just enough time to get to class on time, so Sara gets ready and goes to class.

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John

Personal Description

John is a 46-year-old self-employed carpenter who makes high-end custom furniture and does some limited home interior work like built-in storage and furnishings. He is formally educated in and enjoys many forms of modern art. John lives with his wife Nan and their two cats in an older house outside of Bloomington, Indiana. Part of the basement was converted into a very nice amateur darkroom and the property has a barn that serves as John's woodworking shop. He drives an orange Honda Element for frequent trips to the lumberyard and to clients' homes.



Technological Resources

John doesn't feel that he is particularly technology-savvy compared to his friends, but is comfortable making online financial transactions and interacting with others on social sites. He has been using the Internet regularly since 1997, and currently connects via wireless cable with his 24" iMac. John is very skilled with Photoshop CS2 and CAD programs; he has been coveting Aperture for months.

Flickr Use

John has been a Pro Flickr user since November of 2004 when he got his first digital camera, and now uses a Nikon D80 for digital photos; he has several film cameras, including homemade pinholes. He is highly selective about the images he posts, and so only has 768 images, neatly arranged in 32 sets by camera or theme. John posts his images to many groups, and currently has images in 83 pools. John believes strongly in using his real name as his online identity, but he is also concerned about the potential privacy problems that associating his name with personally identifiable images could create.

Tasks

John uses Flickr to share photos and comment on others' work, also using a third-party tool for batch uploads of photos. His most frequent tasks on Flickr include checking for new comments, browsing and commenting on contacts' photos, posting group discussion messages, making a set of photos for a particular camera, updating the date that the photo was taken (many of his images are scanned from film), adding photos to groups, and adjusting privacy settings on individual images.

Problems

John is a long-time user and finds Flickr easy to use, but his habits of use are fairly well set, so it takes him awhile before he discovers newly added features.

Desires

John likes to keep his images of people separate from his images that do not include people, and has a secondary anonymous Flickr account for that purpose. As an artist, John has very particular tastes about the display of his images, and would like to be able to rearrange the order of his photostream.

Scenario for John

On Friday afternoon just after three o'clock, John put the final, finishing touches on a project he's been working on for the past five months. The project involved the design and construction of a very elaborate set of custom, wood furniture for the home office of one of the law professors at Indiana University in Bloomington. This professor has purchased a number of John's pieces over the past few years, but this was the largest and most elaborate custom job that John has had to date.

John and the professor actually learned of each other through Flickr. The professor is an amateur woodworker and is a member of some of the same furniture and woodworking Flickr groups as John. Because John not only knows how to build great furniture but also knows how to photograph it well, his skill and expertise with wood and design are easily discernable online. The photos he posts to Flickr are well thought out and excellently executed. He also gives a lot of expert advice and recommendations via the discussions.

John's use of Flickr has paid off well. The customer for this project recognized John's abilities and was willing to pay top dollar for his talents to have the best for his home office—a desk, a credenza, two display cabinets, shelving, and other various pieces. John has been very excited about this project from beginning to end. Once the furniture was complete, John set to work on the final photographs. He takes pictures throughout the building process, but most of these don't usually get posted to Flickr; they're for his own use in documenting his work. This time things are different. This project was so big, so interesting, and so good that he wants everyone to see it—and so does the professor, who is very proud of his new furniture, and has asked John to please show it off on Flickr.

John takes great care in photographing his woodwork but uses Photoshop to clean it up and polish it off a bit. He's happy with the results and on Sunday afternoon he sits down at his iMac and signs on to Flickr. He's uploaded his photos using the 3rd party Flickr Uploadr app. He clicks on the Organize tab, drags photos from the Findr into the Organizr, and uses Batch Organize to set the titles, tags, and descriptions for each of this project's photos. Once all of the photos are documented to his satisfaction, he checks the permissions and licensing. He considers geotagging the photos, but his privacy concerns about making his location public bother him, and he decides he's not ready for geotagging. Now, he needs to create a few sets and contribute a few of the photos to the various woodworking groups.

He decides to post a few choice photos to the groups first and clicks on the "Clear this batch" link to start with a fresh palette. Next, he drags in from the Findr five of the photos he feels show off his most intricate work. He clicks on the Send to Group tab and selects the Finish Carpentry group. Once he gets the confirmation message that they've been added, he clicks the OK button and repeats the process for the Woodworking and Furniture I Built groups.

John's final task for the day is to create one set for the entire project and a set for each of the major pieces of the project. He again clicks on the "Clear this batch" link and drags in the photos he wants to include in the set for the project. He clicks on the "Add to set" tab to create a new set. He plays around with the order of the photos to create just the right progression. He types in a title for the set and a short and succinct description. When he feels that he's adequately and seductively described his work and got the photos in the right order, he clicks the Save button. He signs off of Flickr, happy and content with his work, and sits back to enjoy a nice Chocolate Stout from Upland Brewing. Life is good.