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We are submitting our report entitled "Experiencing Virtual Major Life Events." In this report, we describe our observation, interview, and survey methods, findings, and implications for the design of a technology aimed to enhance the experience of hosting and attending major life events virtually. We are tentatively calling this technology *EnhancedEvents.io*.

Our findings suggest that EnhancedEvents.io should support the following experiences:

Interactive and engaging
- *Switch between multiple participant views* - In our observations and surveys, we found that participants looked for a platform that allowed multiple participant views in a virtual wedding, for example, the bride's side and groom's side. The interview participants did not specifically mention this platform feature.
- *Watch the event live and synchronously* - During our observations, participants explored platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Instagram Live, or Zoom as they wanted to attend the event in real-time. In our interviews, all participants used platforms that allowed them to attend or host an event live and synchronously. In our survey, most of the participants indicated "Yes" for the presence of this feature when attending or hosting a virtual event.
- *Interact in real-time with other attendees through chat and video* – In our observations and interviews, many participants mentioned that they wanted a way to connect with other guests via text and video chat to see true faces. They specifically cited the "grid view/feature" being a desired and appreciated feature. Most of our survey participants indicated "Yes" for the presence of this feature when attending or hosting a virtual event.
- *Control whom to interact with for both in-person and remote attendees* - Several participants mentioned in our observation study using breakout rooms or allowing for certain groups to chat with each other. They also stated wanting clear control of choosing who to interact with and a mute button, implicating a desire for attendees to have an ability to decide how and with whom they interact. In the interviews, participants stated that they wanted to be able to have fluid social interactions. Also, many survey participants indicated "Yes" to show the presence of this feature is important when attending or hosting a virtual event.
- *Have a shared ambiance* - Most of our participants in our observation and interview study suggested using a custom background that mimics the true event and plays common music. They also appreciated when the event followed the same flow of events as in real-life and that they could share their participation in the event with others. In our survey, respondents chose "Yes" for the presence of this feature in the platform when attending or hosting a virtual event, suggesting that this is significant.
- *Engage in shared activities* - To make a virtual wedding similar to the in-person, we found in our observations, interviews, and survey that the participants wanted to engage in activities such as dressing-up, decorations, drinking, eating, dancing, rituals, and games. While this is desired, it is seen as an extra feature, not the most important.

- *Capture memories by taking pictures and recording video* - Most participants mentioned in our observation and interview study that taking pictures and recording the event would help make the virtual major life event more memorable and similar to the in-person event. The survey results were similar, as most respondents considered this an important feature in a platform.

Simple, fun, and easy to use
- *Relatively low-cost or within the event's budget* - We found in our observations that "cost" or "pricing" played an essential role in impacting the participants' decision on which platform to use for a virtual wedding. In the interviews, all participants mentioned using a free platform for guests and the hosts. In our survey result, this feature was extremely important for the participants.
- *Easy to learn, use, and access* - This implication was prevalent in our observations, interviews, and survey results. We found that the participants were interested in a platform that allowed the attendees to quickly and easily join the event without creating an account, downloading an app, or buying new hardware. They also desired a popular and familiar platform, and it would be easy to learn to encourage as many attendees as possible and handle the guest list.
- *Responsive with limited connectivity issues* - The platform's responsiveness was a key consideration for our participants in our observations, interviews, and survey. They did not want interruptions during significant moments and wished that audio/video quality was better.
- *"Fun" in terms of platform formality and inclusion of interactive elements* - We found that the participants in our observations, interviews, and survey looked for a platform with a fun, informal feel. They wanted interactive elements such as emojis and customizable, themed backgrounds to make the event more fun and enjoyable.

Planning and help
- *Planning services* - We discovered from our observations, interviews, and survey that participants would want assistance from planning services to invite, remind, and plan. They also desired to have an alert or reminder of the event for the guests. Many wished that planning and organizing ahead of time was essential for event success and enjoyment.
- *Event logistic & preparation help* - We also found in our observations, interviews, and survey that participants wanted help in handling event logistics, such as setting up equipment and video recording. They wished that there was a way to help guests know what to expect and prepare for the event, such as tutorials, and easily share this information with guests. Others desired help preparing for the event and during the event, especially with technology testing, preparation, set-up, and recording.

In the future, we will further explore the relationship between the features mentioned in our design implications and users' satisfaction with the virtual major life event experience.

Thank you. If you have questions about this report, please contact us at:

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