

Direct Chat and Messaging App

Mobile UI Design by Mario S. Cisneros

The experience makes the product, not the features
and the goal of a UX designer is to make users effective.

Challenge

Design a mobile direct messaging app that addresses the following:

- An [universal app that adapts](#) well on both iOS and Android platforms and devices.
- Leverage both [Apple's Human Interface](#) and [Google's Material Design](#) guidelines.
- As a user, I want to be able to send new messages or search for existing contacts.
- As a user, I want to have the option of starting a video call during a conversation.
- As a user, I want to be able to quickly add new contacts or update existing ones.

Solution

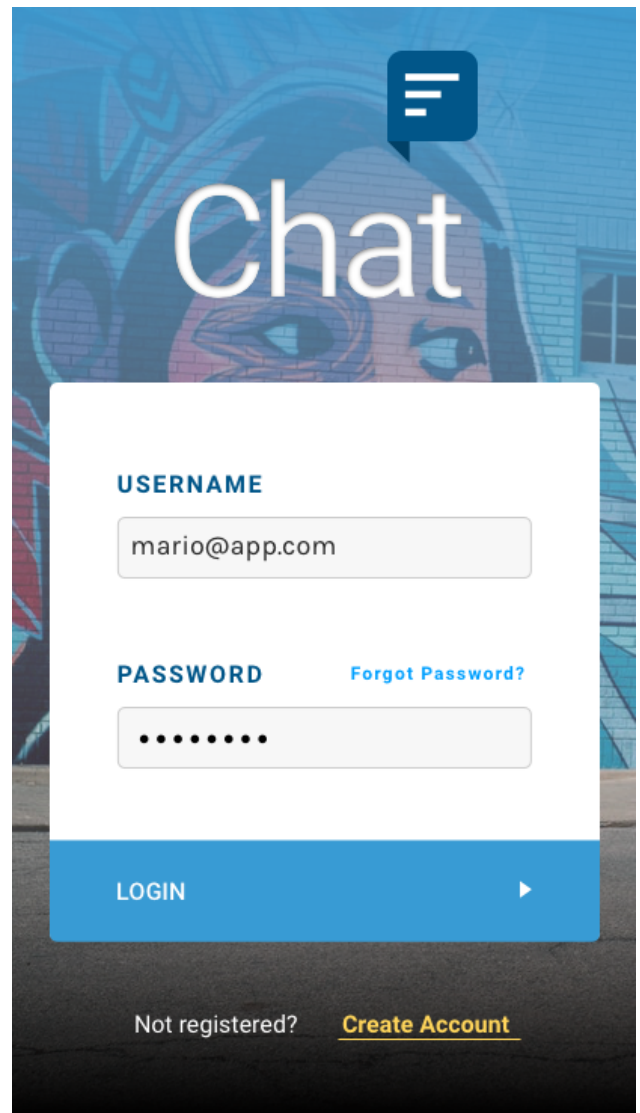
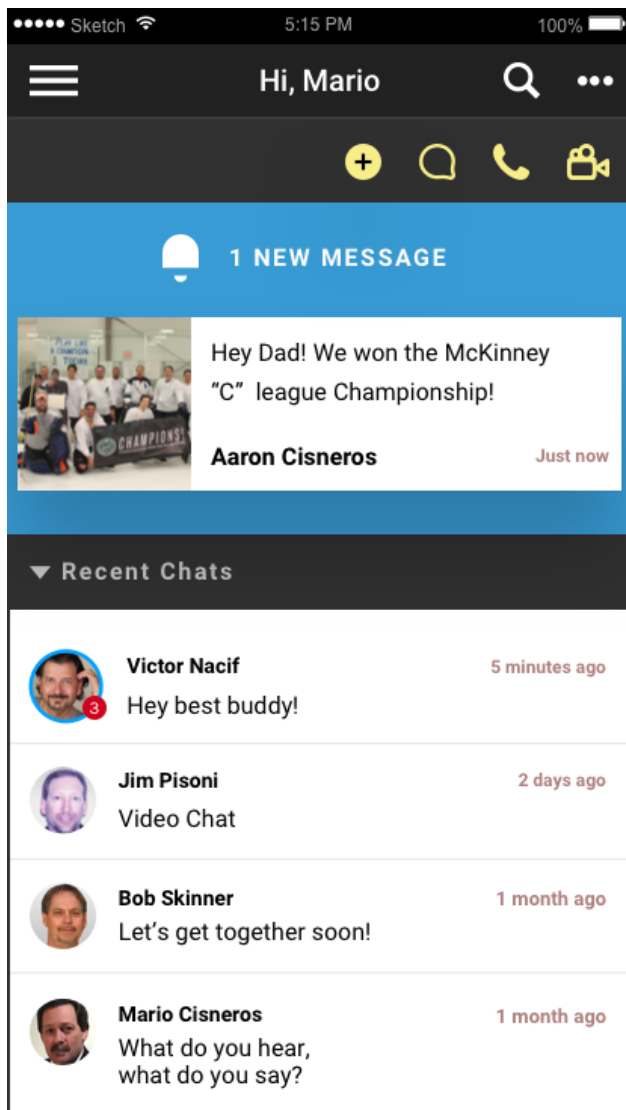
- Create and experiment with a hybrid solution. For example, "Roboto" is the default typeface for an Android, but other elements such as the status bar, title and overflow menu are used in an iOS platform.
- Embrace the design system approach, which enable teams to build better products faster by making design reusable, and reusability makes scale possible.
- A design system (i.e. [shopify](#)) is a collection of reusable **components**, guided by clear **standards**, that can be assembled together to build any number of applications.
- Component-based design and development reduces technical overhead by making code reusable. Standards govern the purpose, style, and usage of these components.

Let's Login

Login Screen

Designed an aesthetically appealing login screen that allows the user to easily login to the app that also includes the following options:

- Forgot Password
- Create Account



Chat List View

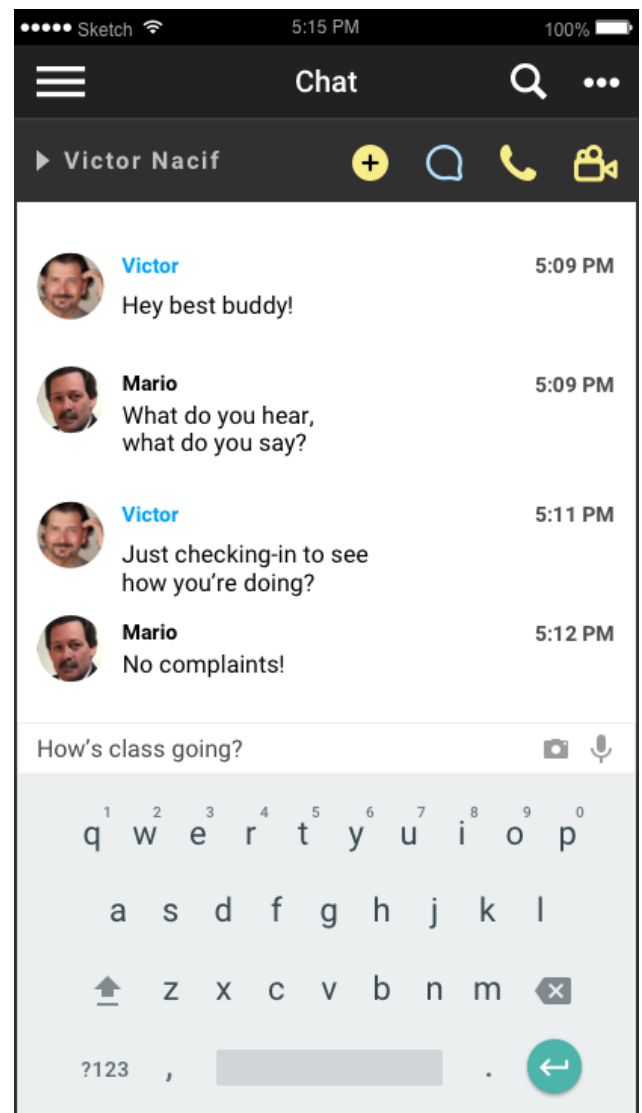
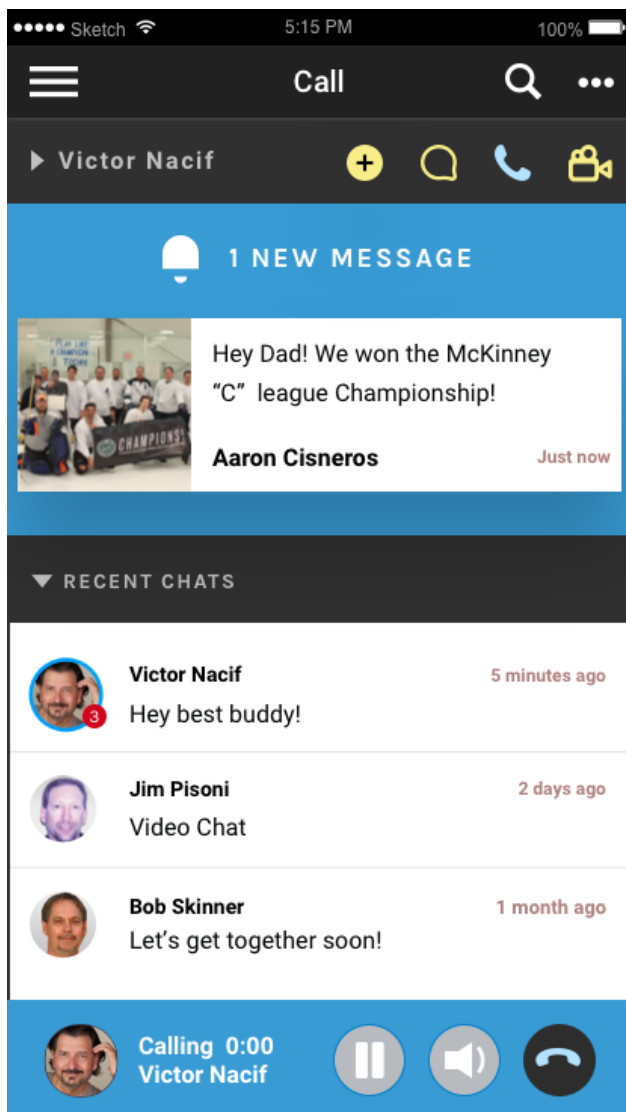
Main Chat Screen

- New messages sent by the user are displayed in a white box at the top of the screen with a visual icon and text indicators.
- The user's most recent chats are featured just below for quick access, and uses horizontal scrolling to see more.
- The number in the red circle indicates the number of messages waiting to be read.
- **Note:** Avatars make an app feel more personal and occupy minimal space. Generally, they are tap targets that lead to additional content.

Let's Chat

Main Chat Screen

- Tapping the person's name in either the new message or recent chats sections, as well as, the **Chat** icon in the "Quick Access" toolbar activates the keyboard, pushed upward from the bottom.
- The person's name, and the **Chat** icon in the "Quick Access" toolbar are highlighted in blue as a visual cue to the user.
- Tapping the **Chat** icon again will de-activate the keyboard, and display the list view, which is still visible and scrollable.



Call Me

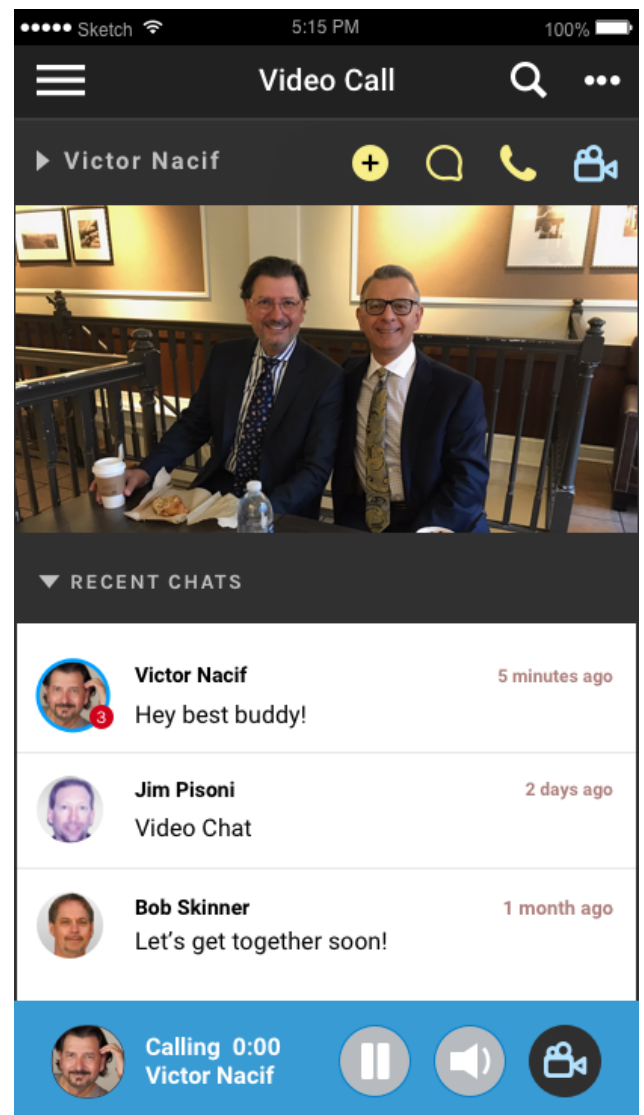
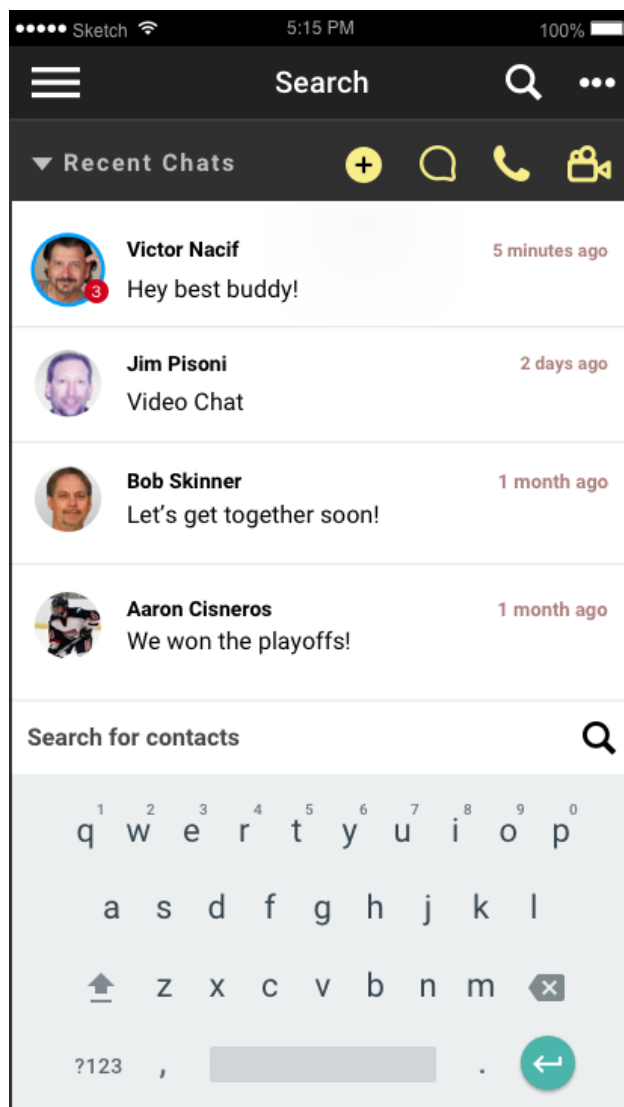
Main Call Screen

- Tapping the person's name in either the new message or recent chats sections, and tapping the **Call** icon in the "Quick Access" toolbar activates the call feature and dials their phone.
- Pressing the call icon also launches a display located at the bottom of the screen.
- The call isn't full-screen so that the user can still text message and send any information that would be difficult to communicate through phone, like an email address.

Video Call Me

Main Video Call Screen

- Tapping the person's name in either the new message or recent chats sections, and tapping the **Video Call** icon in the "Quick Access" toolbar activates the video call feature and dials their phone number.
- I decided to put the video feed at the top leaving some real estate for reviewing messages, which will provide the user with the ability to multi-task.



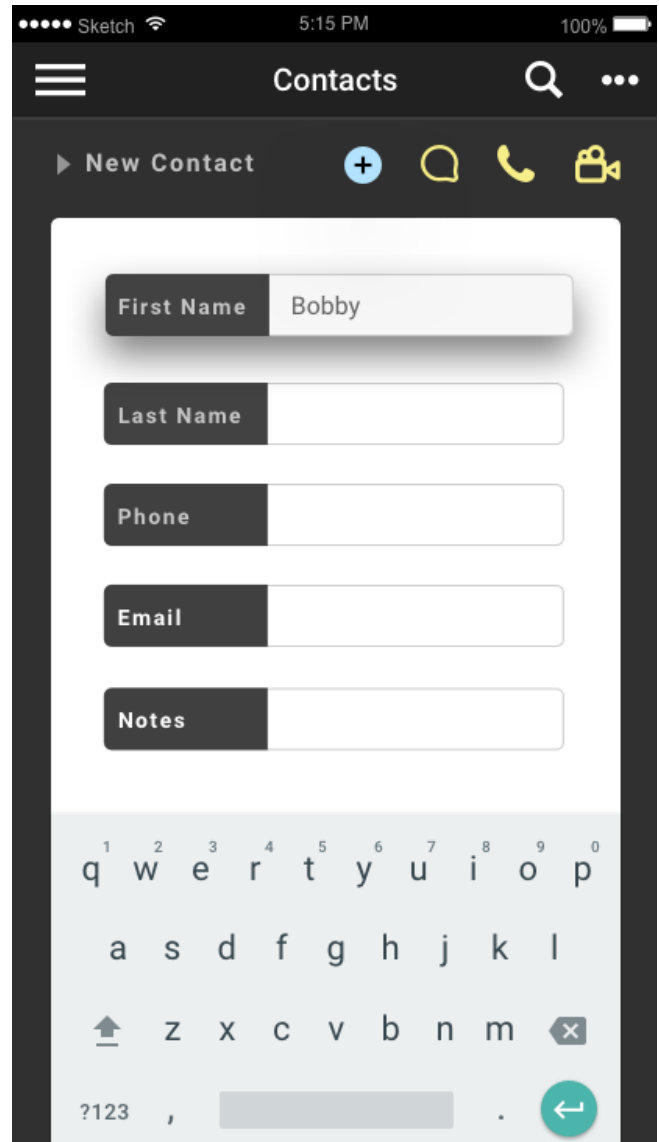
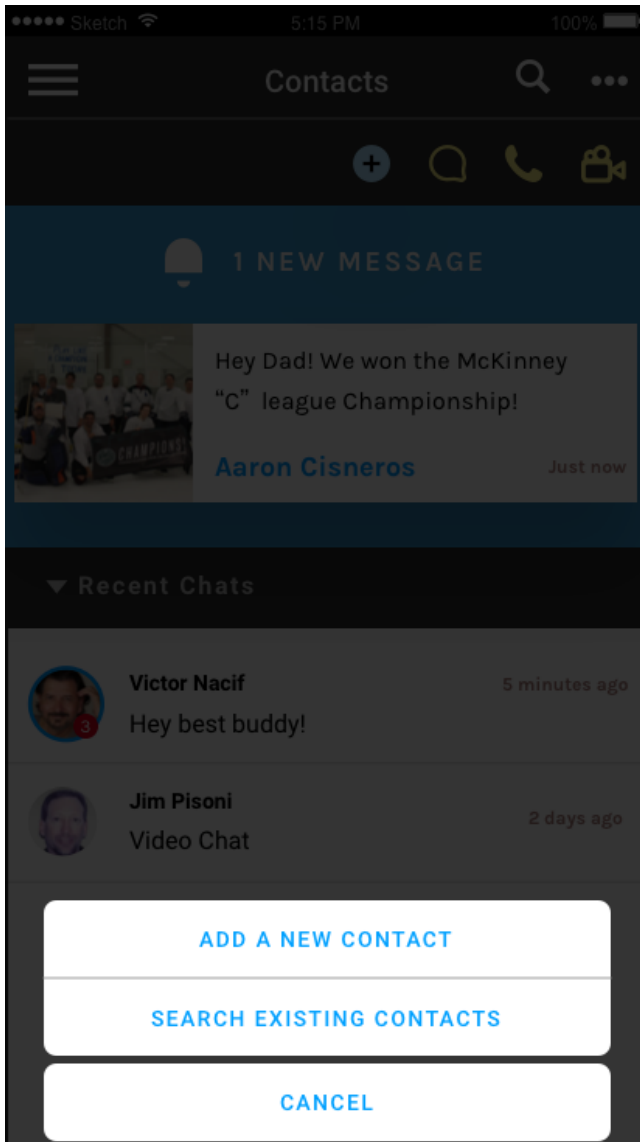
Search Bar

Search Contacts Bottom-up

- Pressing the **Search** icon or scrolling past 10 people will activate and push upward the search bar and keyboard modal at the bottom of the screen.
- I decided to put the search bar at the bottom because on other apps where it's located at the top I discovered that it's not a quality user experience to have scroll back up.

Add a New Contact

Action Sheet and Form



Action Sheet Screen

- Tapping the blue plus sign icon loads an “Action Sheet” as an overlay, which is a standard best practice when multiple actions are associated with a single call to action.
- The user can choose various options to directly interact with the application.
- Pressing there **Cancel** button closes the action sheet overlay.

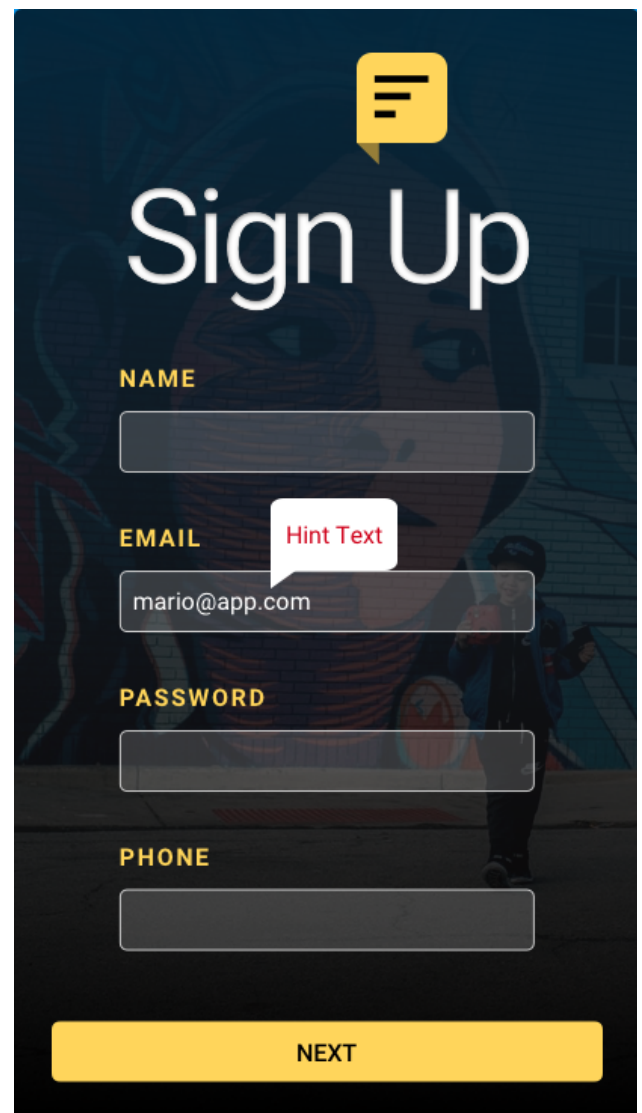
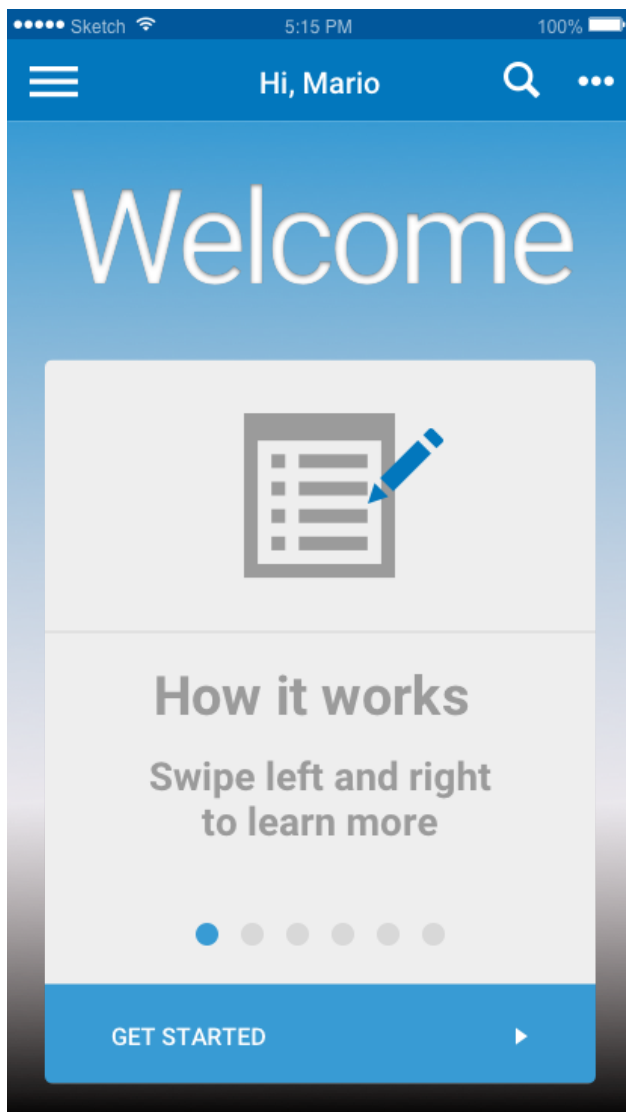
New Contact Form Screen

- Tapping the **Add a New Contact** button pushes up a form and keyboard modal at the bottom of the screen.
- The user can fill out the basic information and attach a note to the contact.
- This section is scrollable and will let you upload, or connect a photo from social media.
- Shadows depict the relative elevation between elements.

Sign Up

Create Account Screen

- Tapping on the **Create Account** link on the login screen will launch the “Sign Up” page.
- Tapping the **Next** button will take you to the **Welcome** screen. Also, the **Next** button communicates a “Primary Action” because it presents a clear strong visual contrast.
- In order to reduce input errors and hard bounces don't put inline **hint text** inside the input field.
- [Website Forms Usability: Top 10 Recommendations](#)
- [Form Design for Complex Applications](#)

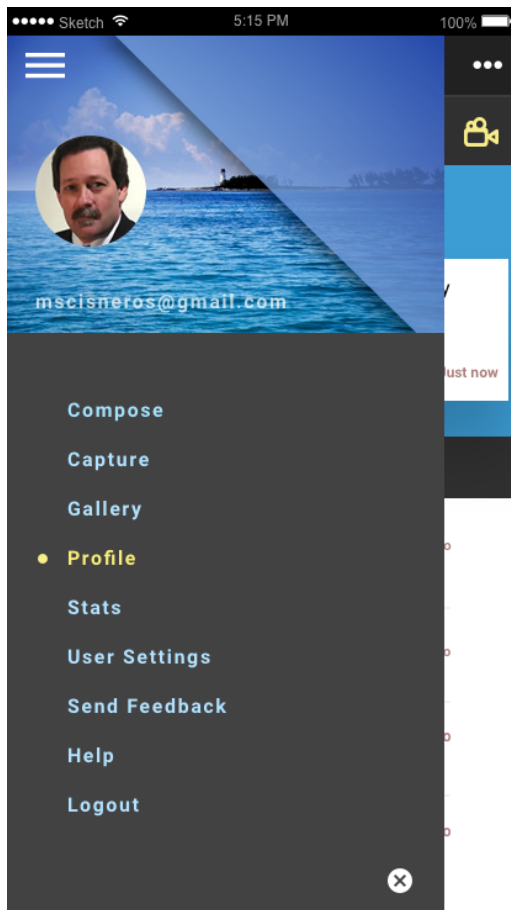


Welcome Screen

Starter and Educational Content

- When you log in for the first time you'll get a welcome screen, that allows users to swipe through various screens that provide helpful information and tips about how the app works.
- This screen provides a first impression to users new to our product. It consists of an illustration, a brief description, and a clear call to action. A common and current design trend is the usage of gray text on a light background.

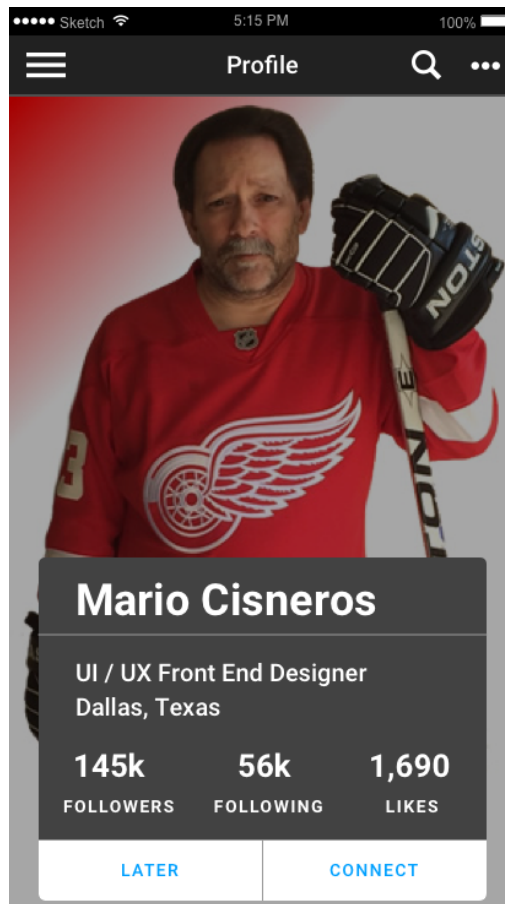
This page showcases other screens that the user can access in an effort to leverage the application's entire feature set.



Hamburger Menu

Open Navigation Drawer

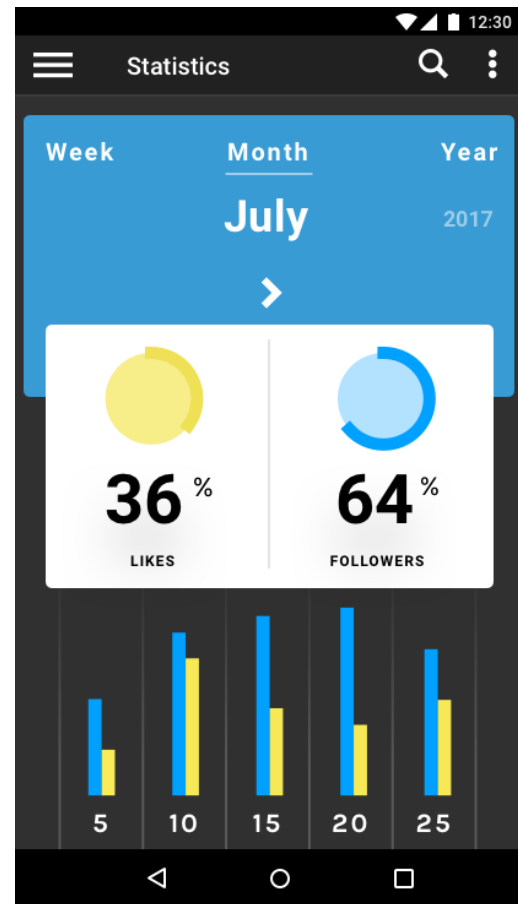
- Tapping on the **Hamburger Menu** icon will push the menu from the left providing a list of options.
- Tapping on the icon again or the **Close** icon will close the menu.
- The “Scrim” is set to 85% opacity.



Profile Screen

Info Card (with call-to-action)

- Keeping things clear and concise is paramount and only collecting data that's essential to the business or to the user.
- A card is a sheet of material that serves as an entry point to more detailed information.



Statistics Screen

Info Card (without call-to-action)

Stats should be easy to see at a glance, and can motivate users to become more involved with an app, but only if they're readily understood and there's a basis for comparison with previously generated stats.

Note: The “Statistics” screen shows how certain elements in an Android differ from an iOS platform such as the status bar, title, the action overflow menu, and the addition of the bottom navigation bar.

Fundamental Visual Design Elements

- **Colors**

- Typically, a colors palette includes 1 primary and 2 accents colors that represent your brand.
- It's a good idea to use the same color for links and button backgrounds as it makes it easier for users to recognize interactive elements.
- A **primary color** refers to a color that appears most frequently in your app. A **secondary color** refers to a color used to accent key parts of your UI.
- Secondary colors are best used for: buttons, floating action buttons, button text, text fields, cursors, text selections, progress bars, selection controls, sliders, links and headlines.

- **Images:** icons and illustrations

- **Motion** (primary principle in material design)

- Primary user actions are inflection points that initiate motion in order to guide the focus of users and provide hints at what will happen and to get feedback with transitions and animations.
- States are an incredibly powerful way to prototype complex animations and functionality.

- **Spacing:** margins, padding, positioning, border spacing, etc.

- **Typography** (size, headings, typefaces, etc.)

- In most cases, a 16px font size works well and it's the default font size in most browsers
- Clear, accurate, and concise text makes interfaces more usable and builds trust.

- **Visual Form:** depth, elevation, shadows, rounded corners and texture

These elements do far more than please the eye. They create hierarchy, meaning, and focus.

Basic UI/UX Principles

- The design and experience of a product is what attracts and keeps users.
- The purpose of any interface designer's work is to compose an interaction layer for software that enables users to access solutions to a given problem set.
- The best UX comes from diligent attention to what the consumer wants and consistently iterate and innovate to make that happen.
- The "mobile first" approach is all about minimalism and simplifying the design improves usability.
- A fundamental design principle for mobile devices is to include only necessary information. Therefore, when collapsing content for mobile devices, try to plan elements so that there's one thought per screen. Don't cram a lot of information on the screen and overload the user with more than they need to know.
- Many users view the tablet as a hybrid device. Tablet designs should **look and feel** like desktop web, but they should **function** like the phone (with tap/swipe/hold gestures, transitions, etc.).
- The concept design stage is intended to establish the product's form and function in a visual representation.
- Designing products to ignite strong emotions is one way to make them memorable.
- It only takes 90 seconds for people to make a subconscious judgment about a product, and the vast majority of that assessment is based on color.
- A well-designed product is accessible to users of all abilities, including those with low vision, blindness, hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, or motor impairments.
- Touch targets are the parts of the screen that respond to user input. An intelligent Gesture-Driven UI can expand the functionality of your mobile app in ways that are smart, intelligent and interactive.
- Finally - respect the platform, focus on the customer benefit, think device first, and keep scalability in mind.

7 Pragmatic UI/UX Best Practices and Techniques

1. Design real-time – Following modern trends and micro interactions.
2. Know your audience - Match the layout, font styles, overall design aesthetics with the audience's expectations and personality.
3. Keep it simple and consistent – Make navigation simple, interactive and easy to understand.
4. Implement a visual hierarchy – Use bigger elements, contrasting backgrounds, or whitespace around elements that should draw user's attention quickly.
5. Provide instant and intuitive feedback – Use feedback messages to convey important information to users (e.g. providing a simple animation for some action).
6. Simplify your forms – Don't keep forms if not required and keep them very simple if they are required.
7. Don't confuse your users – Users have limited cognitive abilities. Don't confuse them by asking them to perform multiple actions on a single page.

10 Key UX Skills

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|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Communication | 6. Copywriting |
| 2. User Research | 7. Visual Design |
| 3. Information Architecture (IA) | 8. Prototyping |
| 4. Workshops and Collaboration | 9. Product Testing |
| 5. Wireframing and User-Flows | 10. Analytics |

Resources:

- 10 Tips to Develop Better Empathy Maps
- Apple's Human Interface Guidelines
- Design Systems Handbook
- Designing for Mobile apps: Overall Principles, Common Patterns and Interface Guidelines
- Google's Material Design Guidelines
- How to Get Started with UX and what "UX" really means
- Most Common UX Design Methods and Techniques



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