

The Design Process

A systematic redesign approach comprising usability testing, paper prototyping, wireframing, and creation of final mockups and prototype was followed to develop an improved approach to Picasa Web Albums.

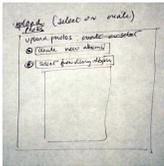
1 Usability Testing

Six participants were observed in order to uncover usability issues with the Picasa site. They were given a series of tasks for uploading and sharing photos, and were encouraged to "think aloud" so that the research team could understand why participants approached tasks the way they did. Direct observations and participants' subjective satisfaction scores with the ease of each task were analyzed in order to develop recommendations for improving Picasa.



2 Paper Prototyping

Alternative low-fidelity designs were developed on paper in order to address issues observed during usability testing. The designs were reviewed, iterated, and finalized on paper prior to digital implementation. Colors and images were excluded from this low fidelity design in order to focus on the basic information and interaction details prior to visual design.



3 Wireframes

After finalizing the basic design, low-fidelity wireframes were developed in PowerPoint in order to start the development of an electronic version of the redesigned application. For this redesign, time did not permit additional usability testing, but further testing is recommended at this phase in order to evaluate the effectiveness of new designs.

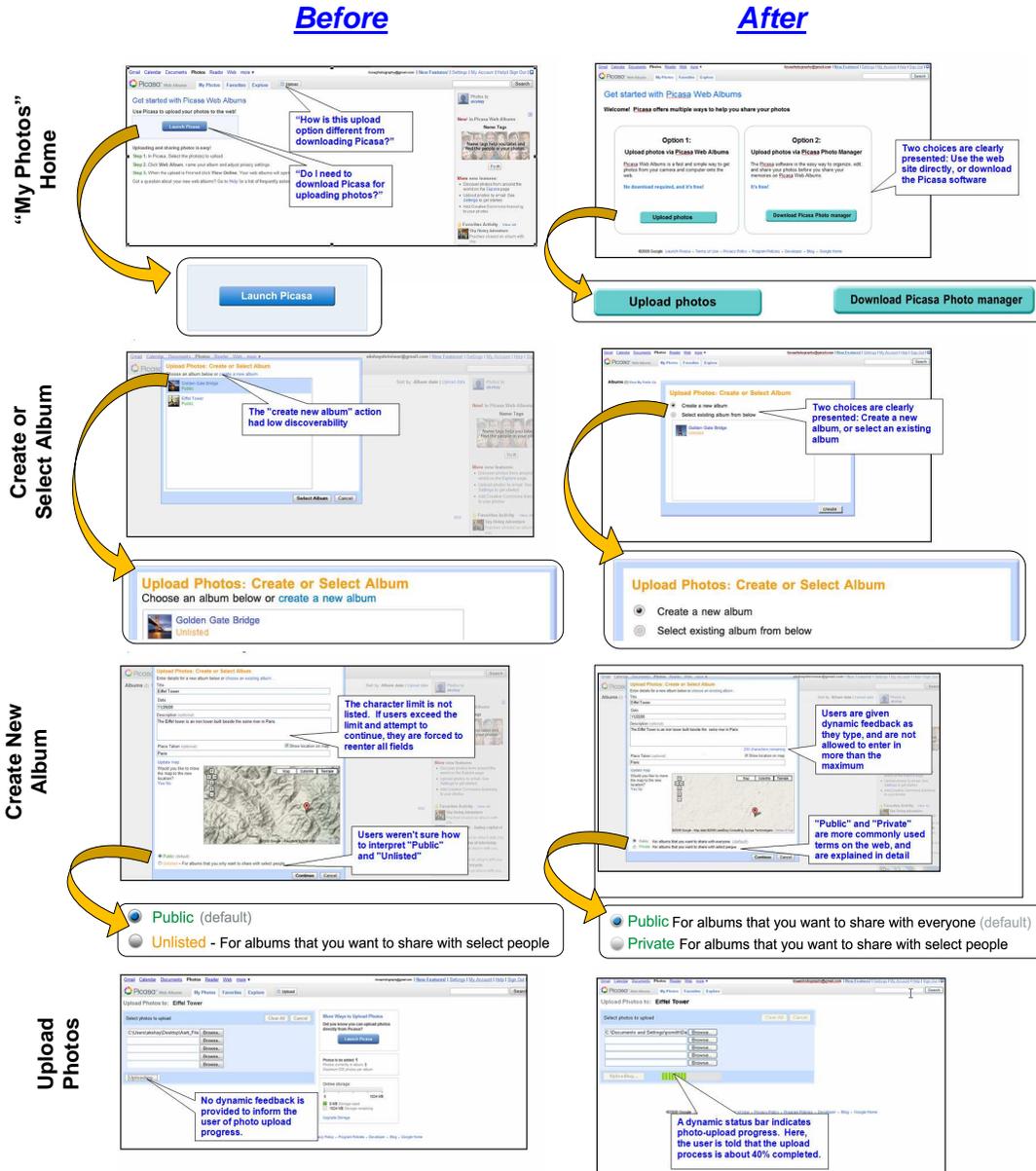


4 Mock ups and Prototyping

The final design was developed on Adobe Photoshop. A conscious design effort was applied to match the "design language" of our suggested solution with the currently existing layout, color scheme and visual design of 'Picasa'.



Picasa Web Albums Redesign



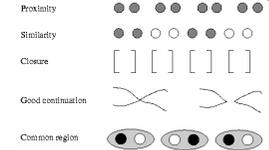
Design Guidelines

After usability issues were uncovered through direct observation of representative target users, established HCI guidelines were used to inform the redesign of the Picasa Web photo-upload process.

1 Grouping

The Gestalt laws of perceptual grouping describe ways in which the human brain groups visual stimuli.

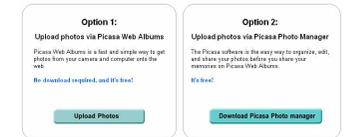
In the Picasa Web redesign, the "Upload" grouping has been moved into the "Photos" tab to leverage grouping by proximity.



2 Chunking

In page design, chunking breaks information into manageable groups.

In the Picasa Web redesign, the initial "My Photos" page clearly communicates two options available to users (using the website directly or downloading the Picasa desktop software).



3 Feedback

One of the key heuristics in interaction design is keeping the user informed about the system status via feedback.

In the Picasa Web redesign, a dynamic progress bar has been added to the Upload screen to confirm that the process is active, and to provide quantitative feedback about progress.



4 Terminology

An effective interface uses terminology that is familiar to users and minimizes confusion.

Due to the Picasa site's prominent prompts to "launch Picasa", usability testing participants often mistakenly assumed that the desktop software was required to use the website. In the Picasa Web redesign, a clear distinction has been introduced between the Picasa Web Albums site and the Picasa Photo Manager application (previously referred to as "Picasa Web Albums" and simply "Picasa", respectively).