redesigning

NOTIFICATIONS FOR MOBILE DEVICES

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Notifications are a crucial part of every mobile experience, but how people manage their notifications varies.

USER RESEARCH

How do people manage their notifications? What are the pain points?

3 Interviews with iPhone users

Female
25 yr
Designer

" Notifications for emails are useful. That's how people usually get in touch with me for important things at work."

" I turned off notifications from other apps if they are annoying."

" I prefer to reply emails from my laptop if it's accessible."

Female
24 yr
Student

" I use notifications for social networking apps like Skype, Messages, Facebook, etc."

" Notifications for gaming apps are sometimes very annoying, but I don't really know how to turn them off."

Male
28 yr
Designer

" I know how to manage my notifications well. I turn off all the unwanted ones and check notifications at the end of the day."

" I don't feel like there are any pain points managing notifications, since I try to keep my life simple."

Online mobile forum

http://androidforums.com/t-mobile-galaxy-s3-all-things-root/698305-annoying-notifications.html

" Every night I get an annoying notification that wakes me up, even when my phone is in blocked mode. It lights the red star up on the notification bar and it says something about a speed booster upgrade. Looks like some kind of bug. How can i stop it?"

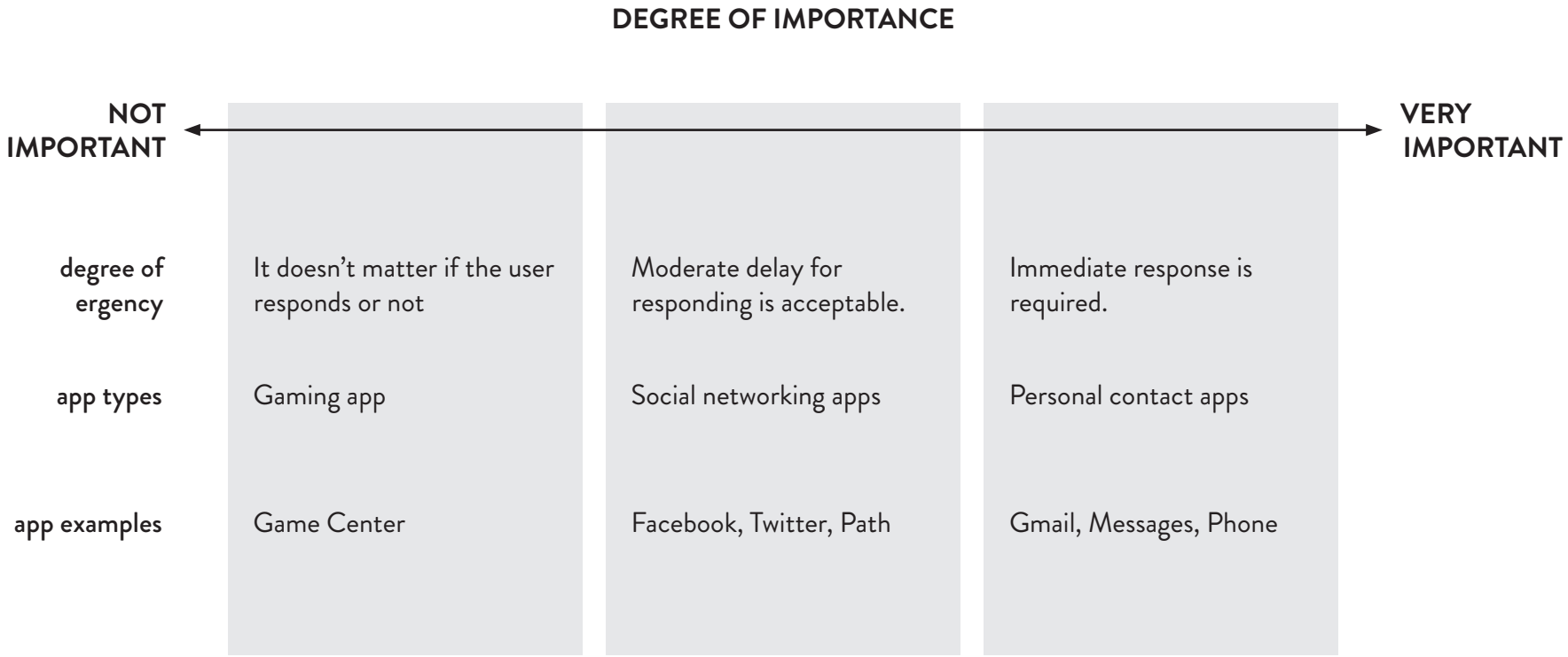
http://forums.imore.com/iphone-4s/234700-do-those-red-badges-annoy-you.html

" The badges drive me nuts. I turn them off for everything but the phone, gmail, and texts."

INSIGHT 1: DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE

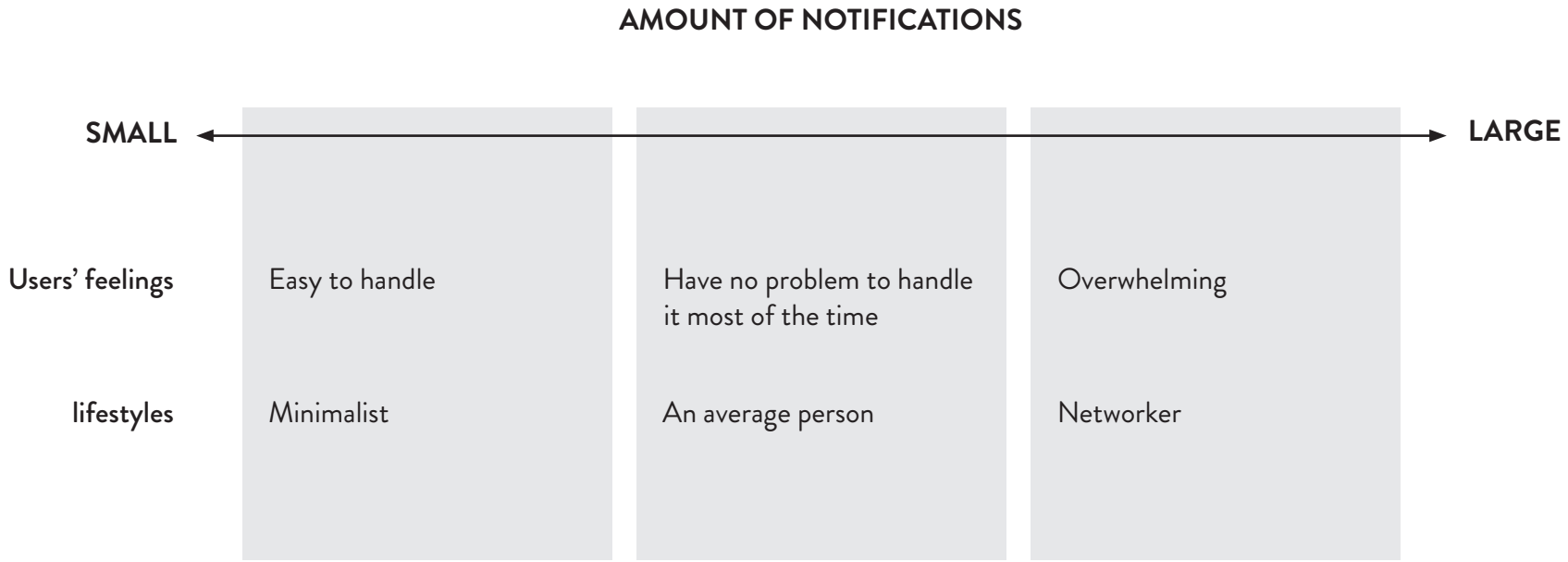
Notifications can be categories based on their degree of importance. Notifications for social networking purposes such as emails and messages are most commonly used by people. Notifications for other apps are considered less necessary and sometimes annoying. The following graph outlined the spectrum of importance for notifications. [1]

[1] The app types and examples provided below are just examples to explain the concept. They represent a general situation based on the user research. The app types and examples might vary if a person has other specific needs.



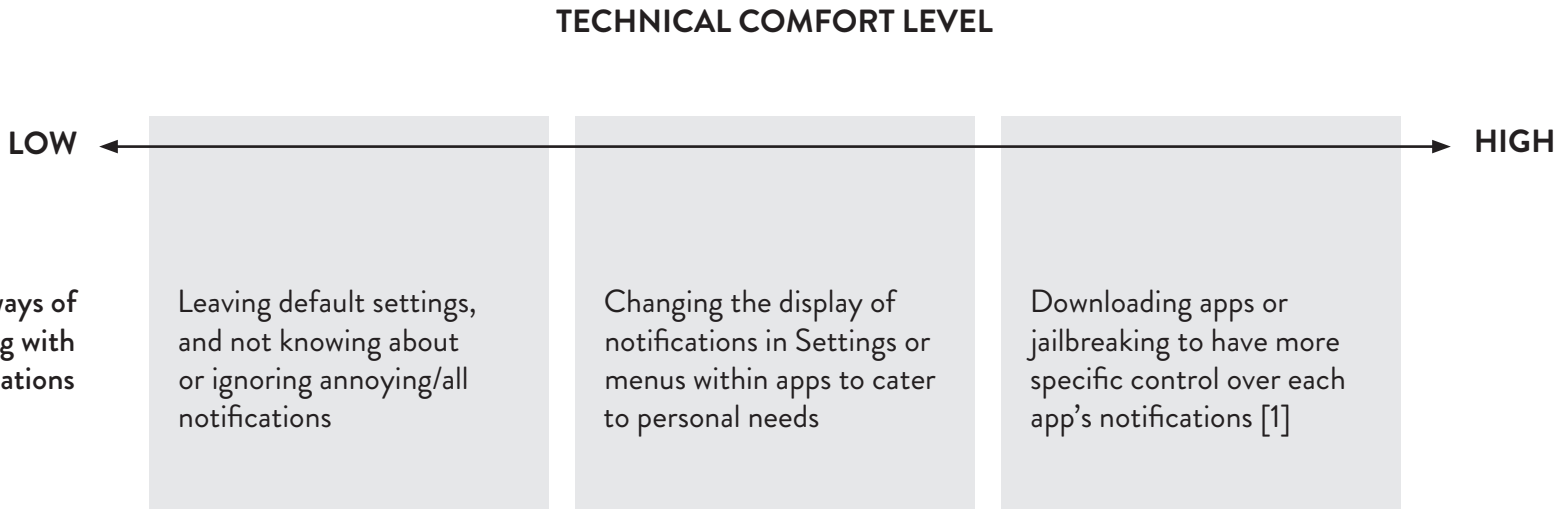
INSIGHT 2: QUANTITY REFLECTS LIFESTYLE

The quantity of notifications a person gets may reflect the person's lifestyle. People who lead a minimalist life would try to keep their life simple. They know how to manage their life to get a controlled amount of notifications at a time without being overwhelmed. Having less notifications means having less things to be concerned about. In this case, they would naturally have less notifications than a busy networker.



INSIGHT 3: TECHNICAL COMFORT LEVEL

People with different technical comfort levels deal with notifications differently. Since the settings for notifications are not very visible, some people have difficulty finding the settings to turn off any annoying notifications they want to avoid. While in the other extreme, the more tech-savvy people will download apps to control notifications' timing and display specifically for each app.



[1] Examples are provided in the next page.

BENCHMARKING

What other tools are out there to manage notifications?

For iOS

AnyReminder

AnyReminder, a jailbreak tweak recently released by developer yeahwangy, extends the 'Remind Me Later' feature to other stock apps in iOS including Mail, Messages and Safari. Users can even set reminders for app notifications.

http://www.idownloadblog.com/2013/03/23/anyreminder-jailbreak-tweak/

For Android

Notification History

Notification History can record all notifications so that you can easily track who pushed any unwanted messages.

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.evanhe.nhfree&feature=navresult#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDMsImNvbS5ldmFuaGUubmhmcmVlI0

Light Flow Lite

Light Flow - Lite allows users to take control of their notification LED (if available on users' phones) - even including cycling automatically through all the colors of outstanding notifications.

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rageconsulting.android.lightflowlite&hl=en

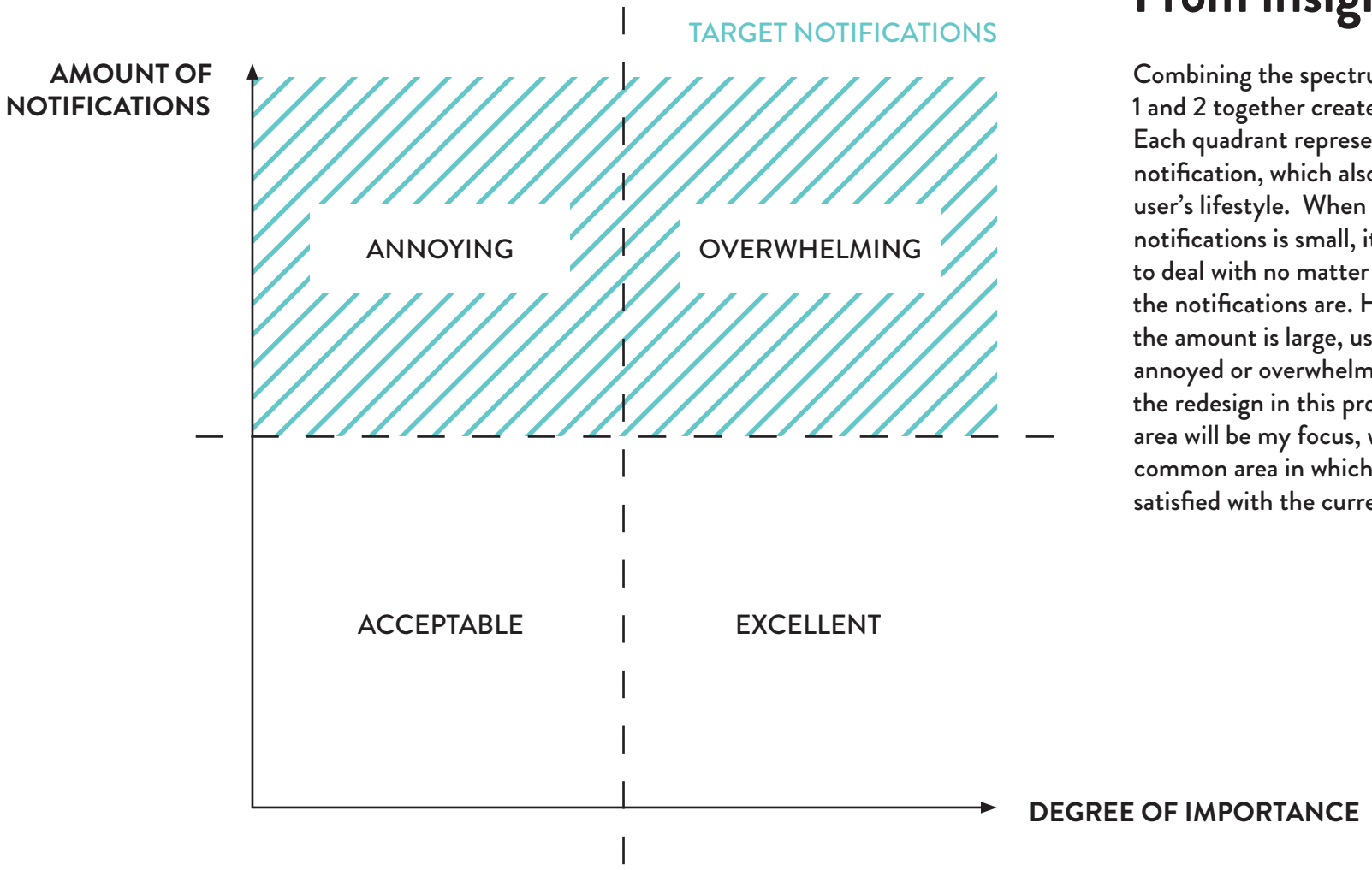
Tasker

Tasker provides total control of automation, from settings to SMS.

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.dinglisch.android.taskerm&hl=en

TARGET TYPES OF NOTIFICATION

Based on the insights from the research, the target types of notification are identified below.



From insight 1 & 2

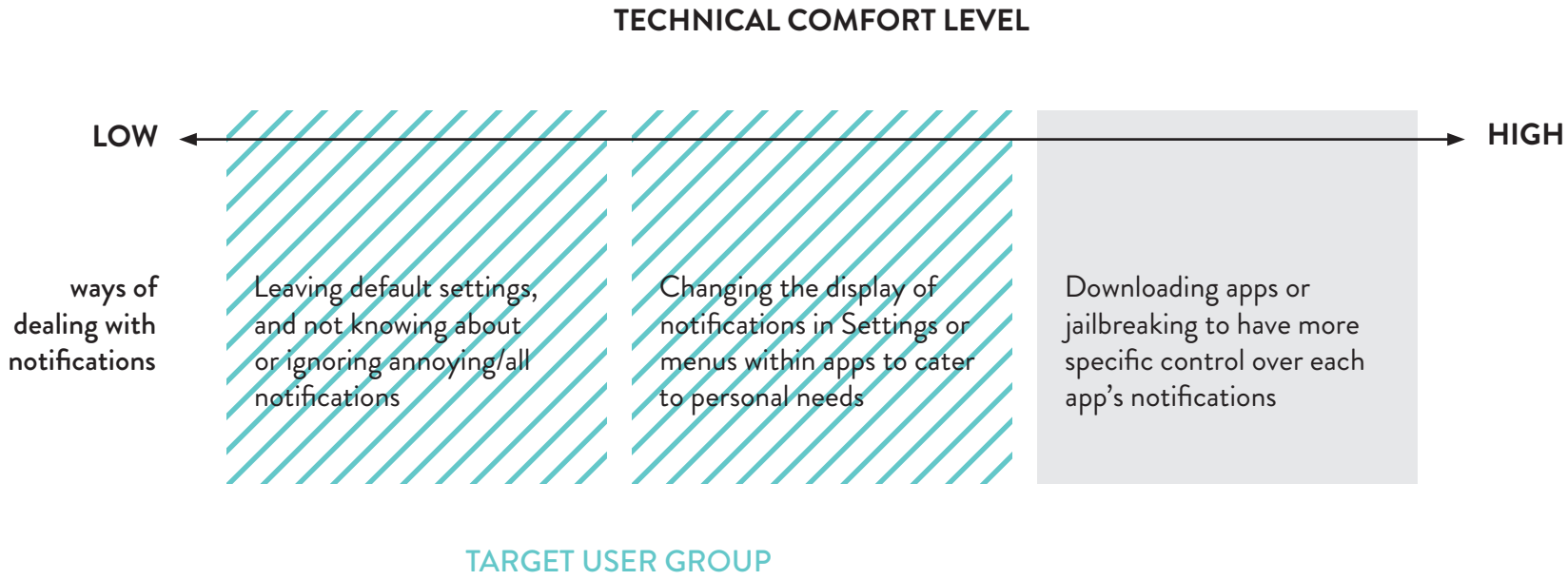
Combining the spectrums from insight 1 and 2 together create four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a type of notification, which also reflects a user's lifestyle. When the amount of notifications is small, it's easy for users to deal with no matter how important the notifications are. However, when the amount is large, users start to get annoyed or overwhelmed. Therefore, for the redesign in this project, the colored area will be my focus, which is the most common area in which users aren't satisfied with the current method.

TARGET USER GROUP

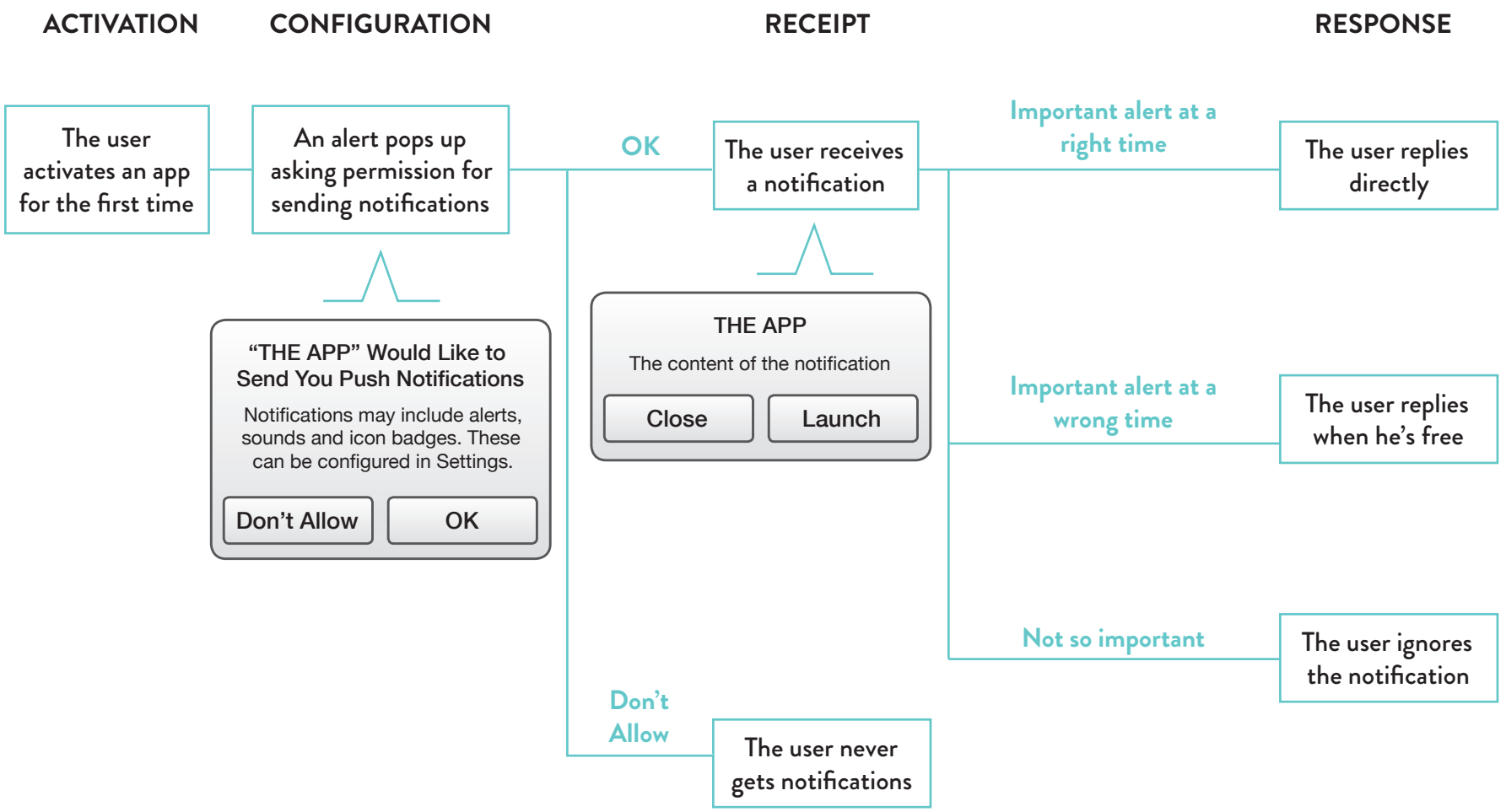
Based on the insights from the research, the target user group is identified below.

From insight 3

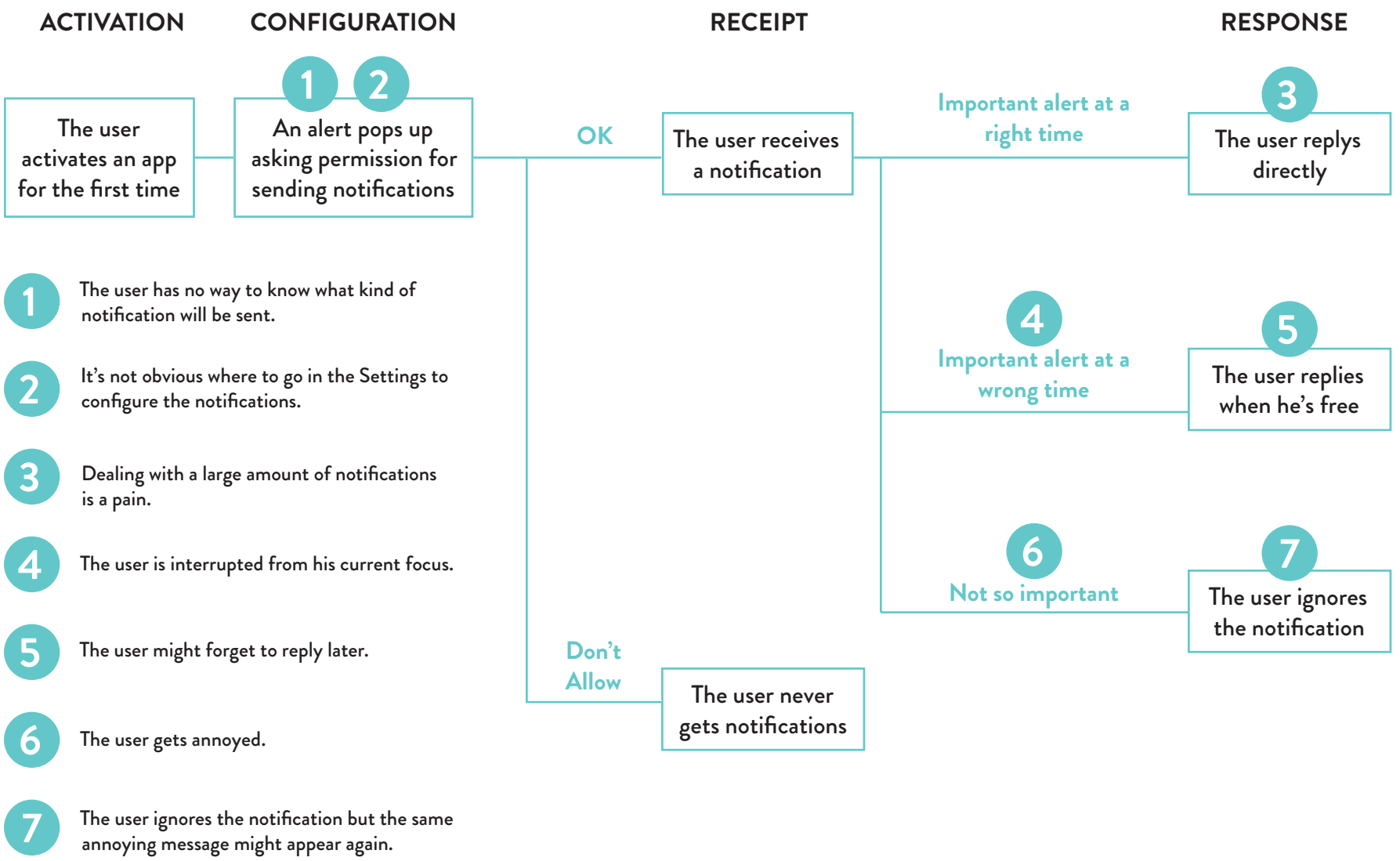
In this project, people with low to medium technical comfort level are my target user groups. For people who are really tech-savvy and want high level of control over the notifications, they will find other more complicated solutions and is outside of the scope of the project.



USER'S INTERACTION MODEL *on iOS*



PAIN POINTS



1. The user has no way to know what kind of notification will be sent.
2. It's not obvious where to go in the Settings to configure the notifications.
3. Dealing with a large amount of notifications is a pain.
4. The user is interrupted from his current focus.
5. The user might forget to reply later.
6. The user gets annoyed.
7. The user ignores the notification but the same annoying message might appear again.

REDESIGN 1: CONFIGURATION POPUP

Pain Points:

1. The user has no way to know what kind of notification will be sent.
2. It's not obvious where to go in the Settings to configure the notifications.
3. Dealing with a large amount of notifications is a pain.
4. The user is interrupted from his current focus.
5. The user might forget to reply later.
6. The user gets annoyed.
7. The user ignores the notification but the same annoying message might appear again.

A When asking permission from users for sending push notifications, a short description about what kind of notification will be sent is provided so that users can decide whether to allow it or not.

Pain point addressed:

1

B A new button is added at the bottom, which will trigger the configuration page in the Settings to slide up. It makes users know where to change the setting in the future. After finishing configuring the setting, users can click "Done" to go back to the app.

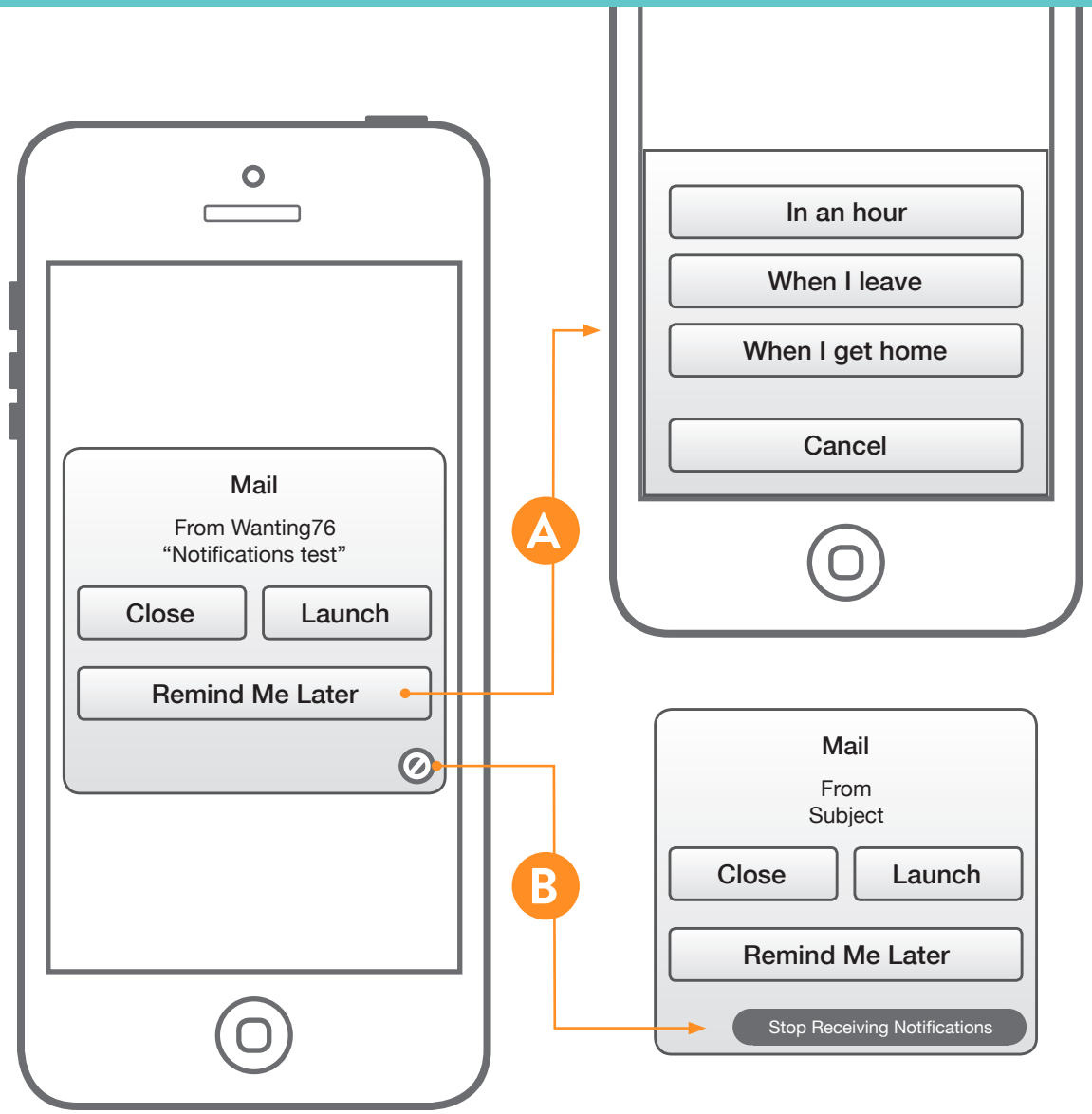
Pain point addressed:

2

REDESIGN 2: ALERT

Pain Points:

1. The user has no way to know what kind of notification will be sent.
2. It's not obvious where to go in the Settings to configure the notifications.
3. Dealing with a large amount of notifications is a pain.
4. The user is interrupted from his current focus.
5. The user might forget to reply later.
6. The user gets annoyed.
7. The user ignores the notification but the same annoying message might appear again.



A A "Remind Me Later" button is added to the alert notification prompt. If a user can't respond to the notification immediately, he can ask the system to send the notification again to remind him later.

Pain point addressed:

3 4 5

B If users find the notification is unnecessary, he can turn it off right away in the popup window without going into the Settings.

Pain point addressed:

6 7

REDESIGN 3: NOTIFICATION CENTER

Pain Points:

1. The user has no way to know what kind of notification will be sent.
2. It's not obvious where to go in the Settings to configure the notifications.
3. Dealing with a large amount of notifications is a pain.
4. The user is interrupted from his current focus.
5. The user might forget to reply later.
6. The user gets annoyed.
7. The user ignores the notification but the same annoying message might appear again.

A If users find that notifications from the app are unnecessary, they can turn it off right away in the Notification Center.

Pain point addressed: 6 7

B Swiping to the right on each notification reveals the option panel beneath it. Users can delete the notification without launching the app. Users can also click the "Remind Me Later" button if they want the system to send the notification again later.

Pain point addressed: 3 4 5

C The settings icon is added at the bottom, which will take users to the notification page in the Settings. It builds the connection between the Notification Center and the Settings so that users will know where to go when they want to change the configurations.

Pain point addressed: 2

THE END
THANKS FOR READING!