Slack Notification System

Your notifications, your preferences

User Manual

ECSE 424 - Human Computer Interaction
Thomas Labourdette, Caroline Berger, Juliette Valenchon
November 13th, 2017

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

a. Motivation for the project

One of the most commonly used communications tools in the professional world is Slack. Slack fosters an environment where employees, friends and classmates can communicate with each other. While Slack has a powerful messenger system, it fails to "ease the communication burden" because of Slack's non-customizable notification system. When the Slack window is minimized, if the user receives a notification, a red dot appears in the corner of the app icon and a generic, stock Operating System notification appears in the right corner. The notification outputs are coupled with limited customization which does not take into account the specifics of the messenger authors- e.g. their group, and channel.

We believe we have implemented an improvement on Slack's notification system. Users should be able to customize notifications to their liking to improve their overall experience. Not only does this involve changing the location of the notification, but also changing the style of the notification based on a multitude of parameters. We have implemented a system where a user can choose the color, content included, duration and position of the notification. After experimenting with several notification looks, the user can then save the notification specifying the filter for which the notification applies. **With all of this functionality the user will be better able to decide if they need to check their messages, leading to less distractions, a better interface, and higher productivity.**

b. Suggested Hardware

A computer that has Java 8 Runtime Environment (JRE). If you don't have JRE, please install it here:

http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/jre8-downloads-2133155.html

c. **Prototype Limitations**

Given the technical challenge of connecting an app to Slack API's we have decided to focus on the HCI aspects of our project. This means that the process of setting the notifications and how they appear have been developed, however this won't actually connect to Slack and you won't be able to receive Slack notifications through our app. We ask that you imagine what it would look like were it connected to Slack, and hopefully in next iterations we figure out how adapt our project to Slack's outgoing message API.

2. Installation Procedure

Installation should be very easy and straightforward. Once you have downloaded the .jar file that can be found on our project page, simply click to open the file and run the program. If you have difficulty running the .jar file we have included OS specific instructions below that will always work.

a. **OSX**

   i. Open terminal, navigate to directory containing the .jar file, use command "java -jar AlphaPrototypeV3.jar " to run.
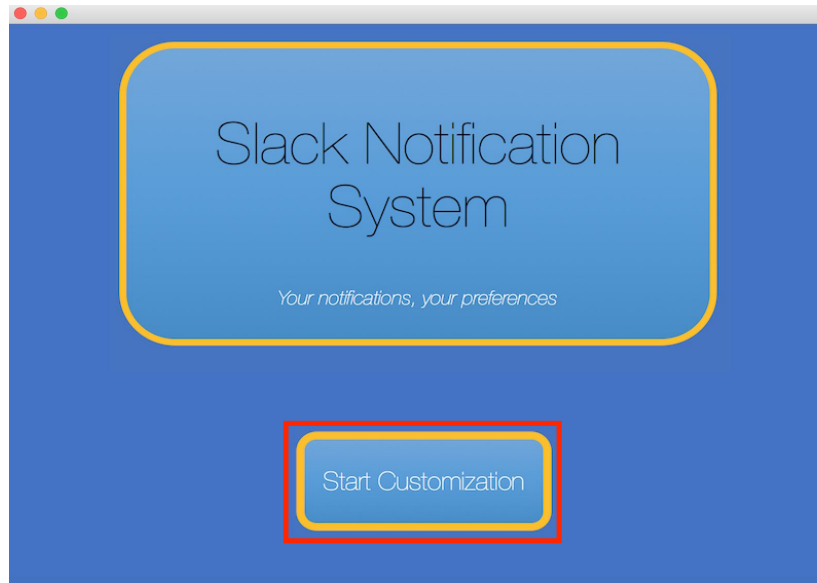
b. **Windows**

   i. Open command prompt, navigate to directory containing the .jar file, use command "java -jar AlphaPrototypeV3.jar " to run.
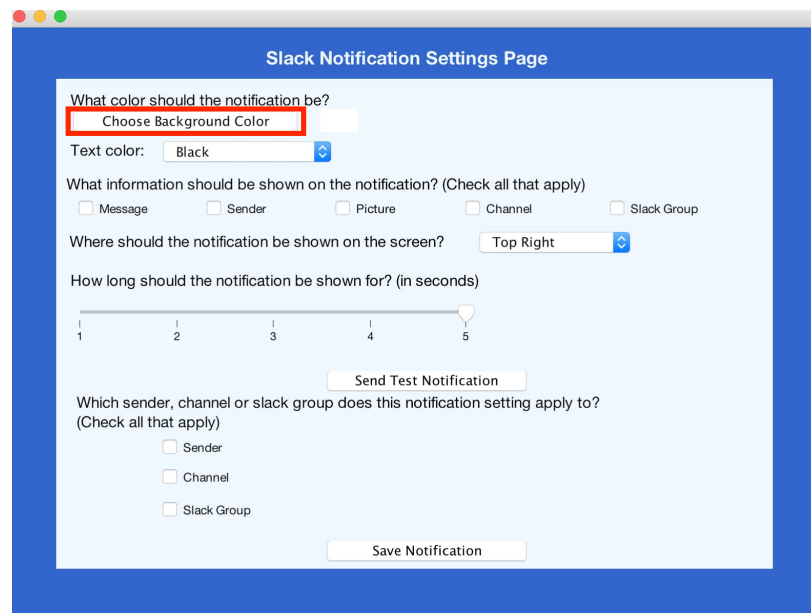
c. **Linux**

   i. Open terminal, navigate to directory containing the .jar file, use command "java -jar AlphaPrototypeV3.jar " to run.

3. User Guide

Once the application starts, you should be greeted with this page:

Proceed by clicking on "Start Customization" and you should be greeted with this page:


You are now on the Notifications Settings Page where you can begin to customize notifications to your liking. You can begin by selecting "Choose Background Color" to pick the color of the notification, you should see this page:
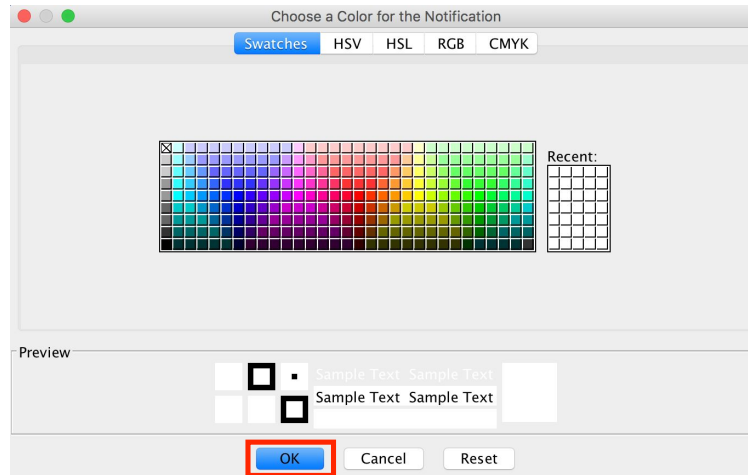
Going through each tab you should see a multitude of different methods to select colors, once you are satisfied, click "OK" and you should be brought back to this page:
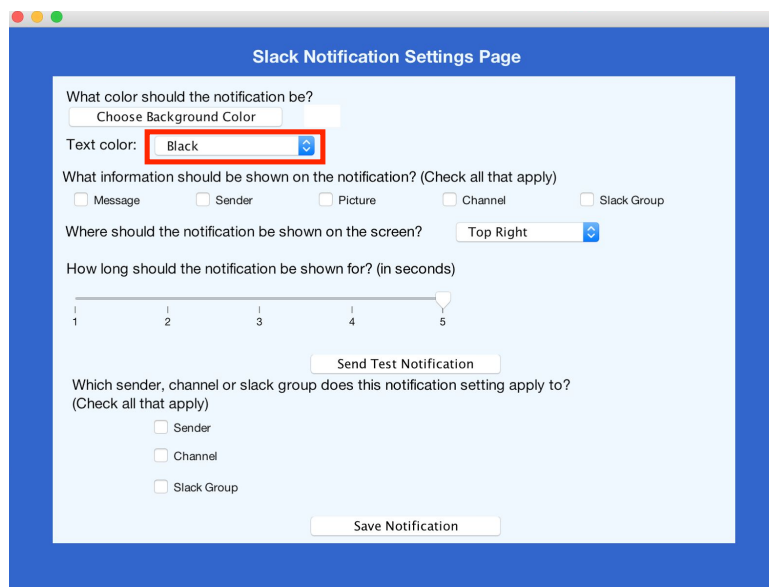
You can then select the color of the text using a dropdown menu:
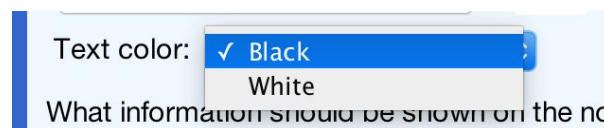
Next you can check off what information you want to appear on the notifications here:

What information should be shown on the notification? (Check all that apply)
☐ Message ☐ Sender ☐ Picture ☐ Channel ☐ Slack Group

After that the location of the notification with respect to your desktop screen in another dropdown:

Where should the notification be shown on the screen?
✓ Top Right
Top Left

How long should the notification be shown for? (in seconds)

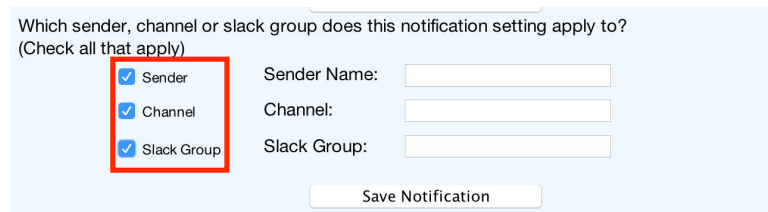Finally you may select how long you would like the notification to appear:

How long should the notification be shown for? (in seconds)

| | | | |
1 2 3 4 5

Once all your settings are chosen you may click on "Send Test Notification" highlighted below:

This will make a test notification appear on your screen, showing you what your notification would look like given the settings chosen. You have the possibility to hover over and close out the notification if you would like. An example is shown below:
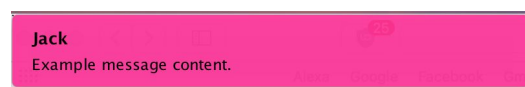
Once you are satisfied with your notifications you can then decide to filter that notification for a specific Sender, Channel, and Group by clicking the check boxes:
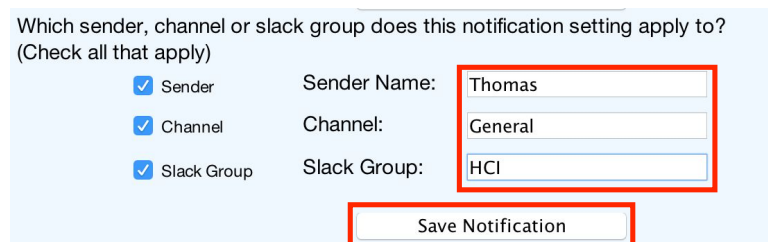

You are then presented with Field boxes to specify the specific sender, channel, or group you wish to filter out, an example is shown below:
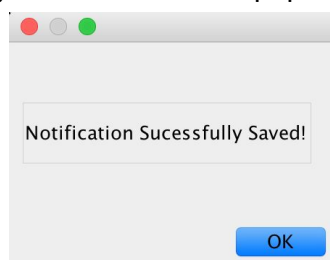

Finally you may click on "Save Notification" once you have everything set up to your liking and you should see this pop-up:

Congrats! You have successfully created and saved your first notification. You may continue to create and save notifications to satisfy all your needs. We hope you like our product!