Heuristic Evaluation

Structure of the individual report

Part I: Your Name

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Part II: Project Description

WikiLoc is a collaborative platform (available as a website and app) dedicated to discovering, recording, and sharing outdoor trails worldwide. It functions as a "Wikipedia of trails," where a vast community of users upload their GPS tracks to help other enthusiasts explore the outdoors.

Part III: Evaluation Execution

The heuristic evaluation was conducted by analyzing the WikiLoc mobile application on an iOS device, updated to version 3.26.0.
The inspection combined a simulation in a controlled environment (to test search functions and profile management) with a field test (to evaluate the recording interface under real-world conditions of movement and visibility).

The evaluation process was carried out with the goal of performing the following tasks according to Nielsen's usability principles:
1. Discovering a trail created by another user.
2. Recording a trek.
3. Managing playlists within one's own profile.

Part IV: List of Violations

Task n. 1

• Issue 1, H4, Consistency and standards
    • Where: Cards showed in page "View List"
    • What: On Italian language setted the word "TrailRank" is not translated.
    • Why: This can produce confusion on users that don't know the meaning of that word.
    • Severity: 2

• Issue 2, H10, Help and documentation
    • Where: Cards showed in page "View List"
    • What: The word "TrailRank" has not additionaly infos on tapping on it.
    • Why: Is not clear how the rank is produced.
    • Severity: 3

- Issue 3, H4, Consistency and standards
    - Where: Cards showed in page "View List"
    - What: User that post the trail has an squared user iamge with rounded corners
    - Why: The standard of UI/UX impose a full rounded user image.

- Issue 4, H4, Consistency and standards
    - Where: Track page
    - What: On sliding bottom with finger the map at the top is zooming
    - Why: User expect that thi can open the Map, it's irritating.
    - Severity: 3

- Issue 5, H4, Consistency and standards
    - Where: Track page
    - What: There are components squared, others with partial radius and other full rounded
    - Why: The lack of visual consistency creates "visual noise" and increases cognitive load.
    - Severity: 2

- Issue 5, H10, Help and documentation
    - Where: Track page
    - What: Near the rise infos there is a "+"
    - Why: The "+" icon is ambiguous and lacks context. It is unclear what the symbol refers to: users cannot distinguish if it indicates positive elevation gain (static data) or an interactive button to expand details (action).
    - Severity: 2

Task n. 2

- Issue 6, H4, Consistency and standards
    - Where: Recording page
    - What: The word "recording" at the top is not centered
    - Why: Visual noise.
    - Severity: 2

Task n. 3

- Issue 7, H10, Help and documentation
    - Where: Personal profile page
    - What: There is a button with a number below the user image
    - Why: It looks like user's "level" but open the browser to the documentation page.
    - Severity: 4

Part V: Summary and Recommendations

Report in the table below the total number of identified violations.

Heuristic	# violations

H1: Visibility of system status	
H2: Match between system and the real world	
H3: User control and freedom	
H4: Consistency and standards	5
H5: Error prevention	
H6: Recognition rather than recall	
H7: Flexibility and efficiency of use	
H8: Aesthetic and minimalist design	
H9: Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors	
H10: Help and documentation	3
HN: Non-heuristic issue	

The primary weakness of the current WikiLoc interface is the lack of a unified design system. As noted in the evaluation, the application suffers from "visual schizophrenia," mixing squared, slightly rounded, and fully circular elements without a clear hierarchy. To improve this, I recommend adopting a strict UI kit that standardizes corner radius, typography, and spacing.

Specifically, adopting industry-standard iconography (like fully rounded avatars) and ensuring alignment (such as the "Recording" header) will significantly reduce visual noise. A cleaner, more consistent interface will help users focus on the complex data—maps and elevation profiles—rather than being distracted by the container elements.

Clarity of Information and Iconography WikiLoc relies heavily on specific terminology and metrics (e.g., "TrailRank," elevation gain), but often fails to explain them to the user. The "Help and Documentation" violations highlight that icons like the "+" or the profile number are ambiguous.

I recommend implementing "contextual tooltips" or "info-modals." For instance, tapping "TrailRank" should trigger a small pop-up explaining the metric, rather than doing nothing. similarly, interactive elements must look distinct from static data labels to prevent user frustration. Bridging the gap between the app's technical depth and the user's understanding is crucial for retaining casual hikers who might otherwise feel overwhelmed.