

Heuristic Evaluation

Structure of the individual report

Part I: Your Name

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Part II: Project Description

I will be evaluating a mobile app called “All Trails”.

All Trails services include: curated trekking maps, up-to-date status on trails, creating custom hikes, creating photo albums and sharing them with the community.

Part III: Evaluation Execution

The evaluation will be done based on these three tasks:

- Searching and planning for a specific hike
- Monitoring of an active trail and providing a review
- Creating a photo album and sharing it with the community

In this process the evaluation will analyze how All Trails is scored using Nielsen’s Usability Heuristics, based on the tasks beforementioned.

Each task has been chosen to test one or more of Nielsen’s evaluation criteria.

Part IV: List of Violations

In the first task I will try to find a trail where dogs are allowed, with a distance of 5km or less and a rating of 4 stars or more, if found such trail will be added to a private list called “weekend trails”.

This task’s goal is to evaluate how easy it is to for a user to find a trail suited to his/her needs by using the app’s filters.

[Issue 1][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In the search result screen

What: Additional filters are present, these filters greatly change the results found, are always active and can’t be disabled. These filtering options clutter the user interface and are redundant.

Why: The well organized and clean-looking filtering options in the same screen is shadowed by these invasive redundant filtering buttons

Severity: 2

[Issue 2][Heuristic 8] Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

Where: In an empty list screen

What: a map button is present, meant to show a map with all of the trails in the list, the map button overlaps a button to add trails to the list.

Why:

Severity: 1

In the second task, I will use the app whilst on an active trail, to monitor the road ahead, to get real-time updates and analyze how the app behaves when the user is focused on the trail.

[Issue 3][Heuristic 6] Recognition Rather Than Recall

Where: In the detail screen, inside the time splits submenu, of a completed hike

What: a bar graph meant to better visualize the held pace has no indication of metrics used

Why: the user has to deduce the held pace from the graph without a clear indication on performance, also the bar graph is misaligned with numeric entries, thus disorienting the user

Severity: 1

[Issue 4][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In a completed hike, inside the photo album gallery

What: the photos are presented as a one way scrollable gallery but are then displayed in a circular way

Why: the user expects to reach the final photo and be unable to keep scrolling

Severity: 2

[Issue 5][Heuristic 3] User Control and Freedom

Where: In a hike list

What: a custom activity cannot be removed from the hike list, the only way is by deleting the list altogether

Why: the user expects to be able to remove the activity as any other list entry

Severity: 4

[Issue 6][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In a hike list

What: a custom hike is not handled like any other hike

Why: the user expects custom and non-custom hikes to work in the same way

Severity: 2

In the third task, I will upload some trail photos and create a gallery to share with the community.

[Issue 7][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In a hike photo gallery

What: the status, places of interest, seasonal grouped photos and photographic tour bottom bar menu is displayed as a horizontally scrollable menu but is in fact not a scrollable menu

Why: a user would expect to swipe horizontally to change the screen

Severity: 2

[Issue 8][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In a hike with multiple points of interest

What: a floating button meant for scrolling through the ordered points alludes to a horizontally scrollable navigation

Why: a user would expect to swipe horizontally to see the points of interest

Severity: 2

[Issue 9][Heuristic 3] User Control and Freedom

Where: In a hike's map overview

What: there is no clear button for a user to press to get back to the hike's information page

Why: menu dropdown buttons are used improperly, confusing the user on how to exit the screen

Severity: 3

[Issue 10][Heuristic 2] Match between System and the Real World

Where: In another's user profile page

What: "Seguiti" appears when the other user and the user follow each other, this is incorrect in Italian

Why: Italian speaking users may be confused by the term

Severity: 2

[Issue 11][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In another's user profile page

What: the numeric count of the user's followers are under "Followers" while the users that are followed by the user are under "Seguiti"

Why: There is a discrepancy in language used, both English and Italian terms were used in a context where only one should be used

Severity: 3

These were not found while doing any of the beforementioned tasks.

[Issue 12][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In the settings page

What: The option to delete the account is in an "Advanced" menu, not in the main settings menu like with the "Logout" button.

Why: A user would expect to find these options in the correctly labeled "danger" zone in the same space.

Severity: 3

[Issue 13][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In the settings page, in the “storage” section

What: “Tipi di mappe scaricate” actually opens a popup to delete downloaded maps.

Why: An italian speaking user may be confused by this sentence

Severity: 2

[Issue 14][Heuristic 4] Consistency and Standards

Where: In the settings page, in the “storage” section

What: When choosing which type of connection to use to download maps, the user is prompted with “wifi” and “cellulare”

Why: An italian speaking user may be confused by this sentence

Severity: 3

[Issue 15][Heuristic 10] Help and Documentation

Where: In the settings page, in the assistance section

What: The user must navigate to different apps to get help on the app

Why: This slows and obstruct a user trying to get help on the app

Severity: 2

Part V: Summary and Recommendations

In the table below, all heuristic violations and their count will be displayed.

Heuristic	# violations
H1: Visibility of system status	0
H2: Match between system and the real world	1
H3: User control and freedom	2
H4: Consistency and standards	9
H5: Error prevention	0
H6: Recognition rather than recall	1
H7: Flexibility and efficiency of use	0
H8: Aesthetic and minimalist design	1
H9: Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors	0

H10: Help and documentation	1
HN: Non-heuristic issue	0

The application examined, “All Trails”, is widely used by experienced outdoor enjoyers, but it still presents itself as beginner-friendly.

It allows for search, bookmark and share of trails; filtered search for specific accessibility, scenery, available activities, difficulty options; bookmark in lists with privacy controls; sharing with a world-wide community, social-like features.

Many of the violations found were of consistency in language used and button locations, since the app started with an english speaking userbase, it is reasonable that it may lack correct translations in other languages, but since it is open to other languages it is no longer excusable; a more through check on translations used or adopting a more standard dictionary is required.

Other violations found were in regards to the user’s freedom, the app does not provide a clear difference between an “activity” and a hike, such difference is especially visible in how they are managed inside a list; this ought to be looked at, either by being handled the same or removing activities from lists.

Furthermore, the app’s “help” section opens a browser’s link with the same help section; a web screen may facilitate the user in searching through the documentation.

The app has a paid premium version with more features, during evaluation the paid version is not used and unfortunately these features cannot be evaluated for usability; it is worth to mention that many screen had a floating button to invite the user to upgrade to the premium version, due to this navigating the app and its features sometimes was cumbersome.

The evaluation concludes with overall positive scores, not many severe violations were found, the app’s features a rich and responsive appearance, with flexible and intuitive modes of operation.