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Reviewing: XXX, seat #2

#1: Strive for consistency
Terminologies used in dialog boxes are inconsistent. Most options for intermediate dialog boxes used the terms “OK” and “Cancel” but the options for editing task status (Page 3) are “✓” and “X”. This can be fixed by standardising the buttons, in this case, to “OK” and “Cancel”.

Prototype has consistent visual layout by having sharp-corner shapes and outline, ranging from the components in Main Interface Page (Page 1) to the Dialog box (Page 2). The consistent components include the header (“Outing task list”, search bar), body (task’s description) and bottom (progress bars).

However, the inconsistent shape of clickable buttons might be confusing for users. For example, the buttons in Page 1 (“Undo last”, “Add”, “Modify”) have round-corners/ resembles a scroll, but the buttons in the Dialog boxes in Page 2 (“OK”, “Cancel”, “Confirm”) have sharp-corners. This can be improved by standardizing the corners of clickable buttons to be round instead of sharp, as the latter might not be obvious that they are clickable since the other non-clickable components are sharp-cornered.

#2: Cater to universal usability
Prototype has not followed this rule closely as it has low plasticity. The Main Interface (Page 1) is filled with many different components and it is not possible to display them all on a mobile phone, regardless of the phone’s orientation. This can only be solved by re-designing the entire prototype to be mobile friendly by making it responsive or having a mobile version.

#3: Offer informative feedback
Prototype follows this rule very closely as it provides feedback e.g. expanding the subtask (Page 1) for most user actions

However, it is not clear that the body of the main interface (Page 1) can be scrolled through as there’s nothing that indicates so. This can however be easily fixed by adding a scrollbar at the right of the body, or adding a shadow from the bottom bar on the middle portion to give the effect that the task list is not completed.

#4: Design dialogs to yield closure
The prototype does not really follow this rule very closely. After the user confirmed an action (Add, Modify etc.), the interaction flow ended without notifying the user that the action has been successfully executed, possibly resulting in the user having to take some time to understand based on the changes in the interface. This can be improved by providing information feedback to the user after the action has been successfully executed through a modal, alert etc., thus giving the user a sense of accomplishment.

In addition, it is unclear what are the different steps, and how many are there, in each set of dialogs. This can be improved by using a wizard to guide users through the process, and is especially handy when there are many tasks involved (e.g. from selecting task’s category, to filling in the task’s detail).

#5: Permit easy reversal of actions
This rule has been followed closely as user can undo all previous actions quickly and easily. For example, there is a “Undo Last” button on the Main Interface (Page 1) and an “Cancel” option on all dialog boxes, allowing users to undo and remedy any unintended action being carried out.

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#6: Support internal locus of control
This rule has been followed closely as the user is in-charge of the interface and in control. This is achieved as there is no acausality but only causality, as all changes in the interface are triggered only upon the user clicking a button. For example, dialog boxes only appear/ change states when the user clicks on a button.

#7: Reduce short term memory
This rule has been followed closely as information from dialog boxes are passed from one state to the next, thus users do not have to remember how they ended up at each dialog box / what they should do.

#8: Prevent errors
Prototype follows this rule closely and has been designed to reduce the chances for error. E.g. when a user is editing task(s) (Page 3), the header and progress bar will be greyed out and only the task can be clickable.

However, the inconsistency of action buttons and lack of error message is can definitely be improved.

Firstly, the prototype shows inconsistency of action buttons. For example, the proceeding button for most intermediate dialog boxes are on the left (e.g. “OK”, “Confirm”). However, the proceeding button for editing of task status (Page 3) are “✓” and it is placed on the right instead. This inconsistency might cause users to click wrongly due to habit. This can however be easily fixed by switching the position of the “✓” and “X” such that the option for proceeding is standardised to be on the left instead.

Secondly, error feedback is lacking for users’ input when it comes to adding/ modifying task (Page 2, 3). Users are shown the fields *Name, Description, Deadline* but it is unclear if these fields are compulsory or have a specified input format. Assuming that *Name* is compulsory and *Description* is optional, the interface can be improved by adding an asterisk (“*”) to *Name, or* appending “Optional” to *Description*. Error in user input for *Deadline* can also be greatly reduced by having users select it via a date picker instead of typing it themselves, which could be confusing due to the many date formats used (e.g. YYYY-MM-DD, MM-DD-YYYY, DD-MM-YYYY)

#9: Additional comments
Prototype has an innovative touch by using “...” as an indicator of “In Progress” as most people will associate it with “Typing in progress” from messaging applications.

Even though prototype scores low on Rule #2 due to low plasticity, it is not a huge concern as the key features of viewing, planning and updating the tasks are mostly done in an office setting, where access to computer is readily available and as such, the lack of a mobile-friendly version might not be crucial.

However, while most interfaces and flows are clear and completed, some areas are being left out. E.g.for task adding (Page 2), it is unclear if transition to the task category/ task occurs when user clicks on “Task” / “Task Category”, or selecting them followed by “OK”. In addition, for task deletion (Page 3), it is unclear how the confirmation dialog can be triggered after selecting the respective item that they wish to delete.

In addition, although the Main Interface Page has all the necessary features required, the usage of consistent font size throughout the interface could pose a huge challenge to the users in terms of knowing what to focus on. This can be done by introducing typographic hierarchy and different font sizes/ colors to guide the users’ attention to what is important; which is keeping track of the tasks (interface’s body)