Using the Neilson Norman Group's 10 Usability Heuristics for UI Design

Visibility of System Status

In terms of providing the user with situation-appropriate feedback, the Thundercats Car Rental Service Manager site follows all conventions outlined by this heuristic. Although there are no expected wait times over 0.5 seconds, the site’s buttons indicate their use by changing the cursor icon to the widely recognized Hand Cursor icon.

Match Between System and the Real World

While there are not instances of industry-specific jargon, the language found on the manager's site closely resembles language that would be used in real-world situations. In addition, the freedom given to the user allows for managers to quickly exit tasks and redirect to another. This flexibility closely resembles real-world situations where many customers must be serviced abruptly.

User Control and Freedom

In interacting with the system, the user is given a sufficient level of control and freedom. To elaborate, unlike the receptionist site, the manager site allows users to start a task but does not require them to finish that task before starting another. At any point, while completing a task, the user can exit from that task and direct to the Home page, or to another task.

Consistency and standards

The system has a consistent structure throughout the site. The data presentation is presented in a reasonable format, however, some pages lack summary or overview data that may be useful to the user in a variety of situations. For example, in the "Check-In Screen" window, the user is given the model, and brand but not given other relevant summary data like the year; or the option to view preexisting damage.

In terms of standard conventions, the system follows UI conventions with two exceptions. One, throughout the site the title of the page is present but underlined. Which indicates a false affordance to the user by seeming clickable. Two, the text box located in the “Car Info” window is given a heavy border. Which may indicate to the user that this field is editable since it does not match the layout of similar data displays.

Error Prevention

There is some error prevention built into the Manager system, notably the input restrictions when filtering vehicles. However, the website does not offer any other significant built-in error prevention measures such as tooltips.

Recognition rather than Recall

The Manager system leverages recognition by directing users towards their desired task on the Home page. Users should be able to quickly recognize the option they want. However, this recognition could be further improved by using icons in appropriate places,

Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

In terms of flexibility, the system is friendly to both the novice user and the advanced. Due to the restricted user controls, any new user can be easily trained to learn the system. One deficiency that should be noted is that the user sometimes must continue down the predefined path in order to view certain data that relates to an entity on another page. For example, if the user wants to search for a certain vehicle and view its damage report, they take the following path: Home Page -> Invoke(Search for Car) -> Search for Car Page -> Invoke(View) -> Car Info Page -> Invoke(Check-Out) -> Check-Out Page -> Invoke(Look at previous Damage).

In terms of efficiency, the system allows the efficient execution of tasks in most cases. It accomplishes this by having the user select their task at the Home page, taking the user step by step through their selected task, and after completion, either loops the user back to the Index page to select the next task or allows a direct redirect to related tasks. However, it should be noted that the system lacks shortcuts, and other time-saving actions that are attractive to the advanced user.

Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

The Manager site uses its design effectively, presenting the user only with critical information needed to complete their task. In addition, to keep tasks restricted to their logical flow, the user is only prompted to enter data that is critical to completing that task’s current subtask.

Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors

Error recognition and recovery are two major aspects currently lacking from the system. Alongside the error prevention problems, there are no currently available functions the user can exercise to recover from erroneously inputted data.

Help and Documentation

In addition to tooltips, the system could also benefit from further documentation. Whether it is in the form of explicit instructions or a User guide. While the system is easy enough to master for most users, there are some cases where a trainee or other brand-new user could benefit from additional instructions.