# Phase 7a:

**Tasks in the Evaluation Group**

1. **Connecting with Stakeholders**
2. **Participating in Surveys**
3. **Voting on Issues**

### Visibility of System Status

**Compliance**

* **Voting on Issues**: After users cast a vote, a toast message confirms success (e.g., “Vote recorded”). The vote button changes to “Already Voted,” providing immediate feedback.
* **Connecting with Stakeholders**: The chat header clearly shows the participant’s name. A subtle highlight in the sidebar indicates the active conversation.
* **Participating in Surveys**: Each survey page shows step labels (“Question 1 of 5”), ensuring users know how far along they are.

**Problems Identified**

1. **Toast messages** may be too subtle or disappear too quickly, causing some users to miss important status updates.
2. **Real-time data** (e.g., vote counts, survey stats, or chat statuses) may not always refresh automatically, creating potential confusion if the user does not manually refresh.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Improve Toast Visibility**: Use a contrasting color scheme, slightly larger fonts, and longer display times.
* **Real-Time Updates**: Integrate WebSockets or polling intervals to keep counts, progress bars, and statuses up to date without manual page reloads.

**User Experience Improvements**

* Users gain **immediate clarity** on their actions’ outcomes and see accurate data in real time, **reducing confusion** and reinforcing trust in the system.

### Match Between System and the Real World

**Compliance**

* **Familiar Terminology**: Terms like “Vote,” “Survey,” and “Comment” match everyday language, minimizing confusion.
* **Realistic Icons**: Thumbs-up/down for voting, speech bubbles for messaging, and a progress bar in surveys help users draw on known metaphors.
* **Logical Flow**: Survey steps mimic real-world questionnaires, while chat aligns with common messaging platforms.

**Problems Identified**

1. Some icons or labels (especially in the chat interface) may not be immediately clear for new users.
2. Certain system-oriented terms (e.g., “Signed” after voting) might be unfamiliar or ambiguous to non-technical audiences.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Refine Labels**: Replace or supplement unclear terms with more universal language (e.g., “Vote Recorded” instead of “Signed”).
* **Tooltips**: Provide short explanations on hover or tap to clarify icons (e.g., “Start Chat,” “Add Stakeholder”).

**User Experience Improvements**

* Reduced **cognitive load** for novices and a more **natural** feel that aligns with user expectations, improving usability and approachability.

### User Control and Freedom

**Compliance**

* **Back/Previous Options**: In surveys, users can move backward to change their responses before final submission.
* **Navigation**: Clear menus allow quick transitions between voting, chatting, or filling out surveys.

**Problems Identified**

1. **Voting on Issues**: No option to retract or change a vote once cast.
2. **No Confirmation Dialogs**: Irreversible actions (e.g., deleting a comment, sending a chat message) sometimes lack a “Confirm” or “Undo” prompt.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Vote Retraction Window**: Allow a brief period (e.g., 30 seconds) for users to “Undo Vote.”
* **Confirmation Dialogs**: Add a simple “Are you sure?” step before destructive actions (e.g., deleting a comment or entire survey response).

**User Experience Improvements**

* Users feel a greater **sense of control**, reducing anxiety about permanent actions and preventing accidental inputs or deletions.

### Consistency and Standards

**Compliance**

* **Common Patterns**: Thumbs-up/down for voting, standard forms in surveys, and a familiar chat layout match widely used UI conventions.
* **Uniform Visual Style**: Consistent use of color schemes and iconography across tasks helps users predict how elements behave.

**Problems Identified**

1. Minor **inconsistencies in button styling** across different pages (e.g., “Submit” button might look different on Surveys vs. Chat).
2. Occasional **non-standard interactions** (e.g., unusual shortcuts or label wording) may confuse new users.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Design System Audit**: Ensure all components conform to the same button styles, typography, and color usage.
* **Conventional Labels**: Use well-known terms (“Send,” “Apply,” “Submit”) so users quickly recognize actions.

**User Experience Improvements**

* A more **polished and predictable** environment, lowering the learning curve and increasing user trust in the interface.

### Error Prevention

**Compliance**

* **Survey Validations**: Users cannot proceed if required fields are missing. This prevents incomplete submissions.
* **Chat Warnings**: Attempting to send a blank message triggers a brief prompt (“Message cannot be empty”).

**Problems Identified**

* **Server Errors**: If a server-side glitch occurs (e.g., lost network), the interface might only show a generic error without clear next steps.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Enhanced Error Messaging**: Provide more specific instructions (e.g., “Check your internet connection and retry”) or offer a “Try Again” button.
* **Auto-Save Drafts**: For survey or chat input, preserve text if a server error interrupts submission.

**User Experience Improvements**

* Users avoid accidental mistakes and better **understand how to recover** from unexpected errors, leading to smoother task completion.

### Recognition Rather Than Recall

**Compliance**

* **Visible Labels and Actions**: Voting options and survey questions appear on-screen, preventing the need to memorize commands.
* **Chat Sidebar**: Shows recent conversations, so users can easily pick up where they left off.

**Problems Identified**

* **Limited History Recall**: Users may want to refer back to older votes or messages without an easy “history” button, requiring them to navigate multiple screens or use memory.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Persistent History Components**: Provide a “My History” page summarizing recent actions (votes cast, surveys filled out, etc.).
* **Inline Recall**: Show previous comments or the last few messages directly in the chat page upon opening.

**User Experience Improvements**

* Lower **memory burden**, faster retrieval of past interactions, and improved user confidence in performing tasks repeatedly.

### Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

**Compliance**

* Basic flows (vote, chat, survey) are straightforward for novices.

**Problems Identified**

1. No **shortcuts** or advanced features for power users.
2. Users cannot **batch actions** (e.g., vote on multiple issues at once) or quickly fill surveys with default responses if they are frequent participants.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Keyboard Shortcuts & Quick Actions**: Let experienced users press V to open the voting page or S to open surveys, etc.
* **Batch Voting & Pre-Filled Surveys**: Provide a multi-select or a “common answers” template for expert users.

**User Experience Improvements**

* **Time savings** and **streamlined workflows**, especially for returning community members or stakeholders who frequently engage.

### Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

**Compliance**

* **Focus on Key Elements**: Surveys, voting, and chat follow a clean layout, focusing on core content.
* **Minimal Distractions**: Unnecessary elements (e.g., excessive animations or large banner ads) are avoided.

**Problems Identified**

* **Minor Visual Clutter**: Inconsistencies from a mixed design system can cause small alignment or spacing issues.
* **Hand-Modified Components**: Some UI elements look slightly off-brand, creating visual disharmony.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Design Audit**: Standardize all custom components to the same size, spacing, and color palette as the main design system.
* **Remove Redundant Elements**: If any placeholders or text blocks are rarely used, remove them to simplify screens.

**User Experience Improvements**

* A more **consistent, polished** interface helps users focus on actual tasks (voting, chatting, surveys) rather than navigating around visual noise.

### Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors

**Compliance**

* **Plain Language**: Error messages are generally short and non-technical, e.g., “Please complete all fields before submitting.”
* **Immediate Feedback**: If a chat message fails, a small prompt appears: “Message failed. Try again.”

**Problems Identified**

1. **Generic Error Messages**: Some messages lack guidance on how to fix or recover (e.g., network issues).
2. **Limited Self-Help**: Users may not know where to go if repeated errors occur.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Specific Recovery Steps**: “Could not submit vote. Check your internet or contact support.”
* **Support Links**: Provide a “Need Help?” link or mini-FAQ for more complex issues.

**User Experience Improvements**

* Users feel **empowered** to solve problems themselves, minimizing frustration and support tickets.

### Help and Documentation

**Compliance**

* Currently minimal: Basic in-line prompts or form labels guide the user.

**Problems Identified**

* **No In-App Help Center** or FAQ for more complex questions (e.g., “How do I connect with multiple stakeholders?”).
* **No Onboarding Tutorial**: New users might struggle with advanced features (like custom chat groups or advanced survey settings).

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Help Section / FAQ**: Embed short articles or tips for each main feature (voting, surveys, chat) within the interface.
* **Interactive Onboarding**: For first-time users, highlight key UI elements with brief pop-ups or tooltips.

**User Experience Improvements**

* Reduced confusion, **shorter learning curve** for new users, and fewer user errors or abandoned tasks.

### Outcome of the Evaluation & Planned Improvements

Overall, these three tasks (**Voting on Issues**, **Connecting with Stakeholders**, and **Participating in Surveys**) demonstrate good alignment with many of Nielsen’s heuristics—particularly **visibility of system status**, **match with the real world**, and **error prevention**. However, issues such as **lack of real-time updates**, **inconsistent component styling**, **restricted user control** (no undo on votes), and **insufficient help** for new users are notable gaps.

**Key Improvements** planned include:

1. **Prominent Toasts & Real-Time Updates** to ensure immediate feedback and up-to-date data (Heuristic 1).
2. **Refined Language & Tooltips** to maintain clarity and avoid confusion for new users (Heuristic 2).
3. **Vote Retraction / Confirmation Steps** to bolster user control over irreversible actions (Heuristic 3).
4. **Consistent Design System Audit** to unify the look and feel across tasks (Heuristic 4).
5. **User-Centric Error Messaging** and better instructions to recover from disruptions (Heuristic 9).
6. **In-App Help & Onboarding** for novices while adding advanced shortcuts for power users (Heuristics 7 & 10).

By implementing these solutions, the **user experience** will be more intuitive, efficient, and flexible—resulting in higher satisfaction, reduced error rates, and stronger overall engagement with the platform.