**Problem Statement**

Our application, Foo-D-Mah, addresses the challenges of finding dining options that truly reflect personal preferences, dietary restrictions, and real-time restaurant data. Popular food-ordering and review platforms frequently rely on generalized, advertiser-driven recommendations that fail to account for specific eating patterns and diets. This often requires users to perform an exhaustive amount of screen operations such as querying through extensive menus, crowded review sections, and even come across outdated information regarding restaurant and menu item details which lead to decision fatigue. By integrating user-specific dietary needs, real-time social media data, and streamlined restaurant reviews, Foo-d-Mah aims to be a comprehensive solution that reduces guesswork, provides clarity, and personalized dining recommendations for differing lifestyles.

In refining our designs for Milestone 2, the interface and user flows were updated to better guide users through discovery while also emphasizing personal dietary accommodations, community-driven insights, and relevant details such as operating hours or cuisines. Our core goal remains: reducing confusion, increasing trust, and simplifying the overall experience of finding new, appealing, and diet-friendly dining options.

**Overview of Major Features/Progress**

* **Updated Onboarding Flow**: We refined the preference setup for users to get clearer instructions and interactive guidance for specifying allergies, dietary restrictions, cuisine, and restaurant preferences.
* **Streamlined Restaurant Discovery**: A new “Discover” tab suggests restaurants to users using updated filters, dietary restrictions and allergies compatibility indicated by the user which performs recommendations based on crowdsourced user-verified data for accurate restaurant food quality, wait times, and opening hours for the restaurant.
* **Enhanced Reviews & Social Integration**: We introduced a cohesive review page layout that highlights both user and community feedback, enabling quick scanning of key information such as portion sizes and dietary compliance based on user experience.
* **Dynamic Settings Page**: Our reorganized settings page splits personalization options into logical groups such as dietary restrictions and allergies which prevents users from scrolling through excessively long lists.
* **Icons and Cues for Actions**: We implemented consistent use of icons and short textual cues following Nielsen’s Heuristic Evaluation principles (Nielsen, 1995) with more emphasis on gestures like swiping and toggling favorites.

**Major Changes Between Milestone 1 and Milestone 2**

* **Refined Target Audience**:
  + Our user research indicated our core user group were mostly stationary city dwellers located around Minneapolis looking for specialized dining experiences. We therefore removed certain travel related features like location based pop ups for multi-city searches to keep the scope focused to specific user groups around minneapolis.
* **Improved Accessibility**:
  + Based on heuristics evaluations identifying colorblind accessibility issues, we switched from relying solely on color coded cuisine icons to using labeled or patterned icons.
* **Consolidated Dietary Preferences**:
  + Rather than scattering dietary preference settings throughout the app, we created a unified space where users can update allergies or new eating habits. This move addressed feedback about confusing menu layouts and excessive steps required to edit preferences.

**Lessons Learned**

Throughout this milestone, we discovered the importance of iterative prototyping for improving both the clarity and breadth of our design. By testing and discussing UI heuristics in detail within our team, we recognized that even small changes such as reorganizing icons, merging settings screens, or adding short textual explanations could significantly reduce confusion among users. Moreover, the process of consistently revisiting our original problem statement in milestone 1 helped us avoid feature creep and reinforced our commitment to a user-centric approach. Frequent check-ins, low-fidelity trials, and user feedback loops emerged as vital tactics for ensuring that each design choice continues to serve the main objective of Foo-d-Mah which is to provide an intuitive, personalized dining recommendation platform.

**References**

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Various websites & mobile applications for design inspirations, including but not limited to Yelp, Grubhub, Spotify, Tinder.

Team 6. *Milestone 1 Submission.* 2025, University of Minnesota.