Group Reflection

We ran a heuristic evaluation on our Foo-D-Mah prototype to catch usability issues before moving forward. It was a bit chaotic and challenging at first to fit it into our workflow, but once we did it was very useful. This document describes how it went.

We started evaluating while still building the high-fidelity Figma prototype, since our work on the heuristic evaluation was done almost in parallel with our Figma work. We were done with the basics of most pages when we finished the individual step of the heuristic evaluation, and thus some issues we flagged individually had already been fixed by the time we met as a group to combine.

When we reached the combining step we gathered in a meeting and each of us went through their own issues and solutions, describing them to each other and from there we deleted copies of the issues that were similar. A big part of our discussion was deciding on which copy of the issue to not delete, which would be the one that conveyed the issue the best and prevented the most suitable solution. Otherwise we also just spent time removing duplicates and evaluating the picked issues, things such as picking clearer wording for some issues/solutions to make it clear for everyone and prevent misunderstandings.

We discovered that each of us when rating the severity of their own issues in the individual sheet, it was quite inconsistent. One person would rate a minor problem as a 2, while another called it a 0 because it doesn’t break functionality. We realized we needed clearer criteria, the one provided in the slides helped but us meeting and discussing this issue was a big help, even if it was challenging to readjust.

The biggest challenge we faced was definitely our clashing schedules, it was very difficult to meet and discuss the work needed to be done. Communication was difficult as we are all in busy periods of our semesters and we remedied this by meeting despite some people not being able to make it, and catching them up later and assigning tasks as necessary.

Regardless of that though, the best thing about this heuristics task is that it forced us to think beyond our assumptions. Things we thought were fine like not showing loading indicators got flagged hard. We ended up adding modifications for actions which we hadn’t considered urgent before, like saving preferences and undoing actions as well as handling mis-clicking.

It also opened up a lot of discussion about the design which we wouldn’t have otherwise, ultimately improving it and helping us visualize and imagine the design of the system better. Not to mention the main goal of the Heuristics evaluation as a step before user testing, as finding the issues and deriving solutions for them was extremely helpful

Sorting by average severity helped us prioritize fixes without the need of much conflict or discussion, which was great to kind of automate the “democracy” process of it all.

Now, after the combination, individual severity rating and finally averaged severity rating. We are using the results to refine our Figma design, specifically by sorting the averaged severities and working on ones with the highest ratings first, as they take the highest priority and we hope to at least complete any issues with a severity higher than 2. We were not able to fully complete all of the changes due to time constraints, but we at least discussed each of them and how to go about implementing their solutions, which will be helpful in Milestone 3.

From the lessons we learnt, we now understand these heuristics (principles) expose blind spots that we had in design.   
We missed some obvious flaws until we checked against the heuristics list, which also acted as a great discussion-starter.  
We now know we probably should’ve gotten started on it a bit earlier than we have, and that would’ve helped us sync these evaluations with the prototype’s state.   
Evaluating simultaneously while major changes or even designs are still being made is not the best way to go about it.

The process wasn’t perfect on our end, with a couple of challenges we think. But it helped us catch real issues we would’ve overlooked. Now the prototype design changes will hopefully feel more intentional.