

Heuristic Evaluation of Wonderlust

1. Problem

Wonderlust allows users to search for and read brief articles about interesting topics when they have a few spare minutes.

2. Violations Found

1. [H2-4 Consistency & Standards] [Severity 3] [Found by: A, C, D]

The interface used the string “Save” on the first screen for saving the user’s file, but used the string “Write file” on the second screen. Users may be confused by this different terminology for the same function. Fix: Use the same string on each screen.

[..list violations here with a blank line between each -- number from 1 to n, where n is total # of violations]

Severity: 0 = no problem, 1 = cosmetic, 2 = minor, 3 = major, 4 = catastrophe

1. Visibility & System status (H2-1)
 - 1.1. I don’t think the wheel is a good way to show different categories on the homepage, because it only makes one category visible at a time. There is no way to see what the next or previous category is.
 - 1.1.1. Found by: A, D
 - 1.1.2. Severity: 2
 - 1.2. The number of articles (with pictures) shown on the homepage screen at once is very limited. Only about two are visible, and there is no indication of what else is available.
 - 1.2.1. Found by: D
 - 1.2.2. Severity: 2
 - 1.3. The search and + buttons on the screen to add new categories are confusing. I initially didn’t understand why I should want to ‘add’ a category when I am doing a search, because there are no on-screen instructions here.
 - 1.3.1. Found by: A, D
 - 1.3.2. Severity: 2
 - 1.4. There is no way to see categories for an article while it is being viewed. This may be interesting to the user.
 - 1.4.1. Found by: D
 - 1.4.2. Severity: 0
2. Match Between System and the Real World (H2-2)
 - 2.1. To rotate the wheel (action desired in task one), the user must click an arrow. This is an obvious violation of this heuristic H2-2, as in the real world a user would spin a wheel. Spinning a wheel is a much more natural action, and there seems to be no obvious reason why the wheel moves according to the press of a button, and not a spin.
 - 2.1.1. Found by: A
 - 2.1.2. Severity: 1

- 2.2. Another issue with the wheel is the use of “Shuffle” as a metaphor, as that is not immediately intuitive as an action you can take with a wheel to begin with. It seems ill-suited for its purpose, and replacing it with a button that says, for instance, random, would personally be more intuitive. “Shuffling” a wheel is not a real-world convention and may confuse the user (e.g. does the button shuffle the subjects or the articles?).
 - 2.2.1. Found by: A, D
 - 2.2.2. Severity: 1
- 3. User Control and Freedom (H2-3)
 - 3.1. No ‘back’ button shown on the screen to search for new categories.
 - 3.1.1. Found by: D
 - 3.1.2. Severity: 2
 - 3.2. There doesn’t seem to be any way to remove unwanted categories from the wheel, and no mention has been made of this.
 - 3.2.1. Found by: A, D
 - 3.2.2. Severity: 3
- 4. Consistency and Standards (H2-4)
 - 4.1. The wheel UI is used on the home page. This is a fun play on the round logo, but it doesn’t offer any advantages compared to other UI elements that could have been used. The rest of the app uses lists and menus, and this UI element ends up looking like a 5th wheel in comparison.
 - 4.1.1. Found by: A, D
 - 4.1.2. Severity: 1
 - 4.2. On the History and Favorites screens, the word “Topic” is used instead of “Category”.
 - 4.2.1. Found by: D
 - 4.2.2. Severity: 1
 - 4.3. Search has multiple connotations in this application, which means consistency is being violated. In some instances, like through the homepage, search allows you to search all the articles that are on the service, implying search on the application is a global search over all parts it. In other instances, such as on the category page, search only allows you to look up all categories available, which implies search on the application is a local search over the specific part of the application you are dealing with.
 - 4.3.1. Found by: A, D
 - 4.3.2. Severity: 3
 - 4.4. The “W” button and the “back” button often serve the same purpose. When the user is on any first page out from the first page, clicking either of those buttons will bring them to the homepage, which seems to violate the consistency heuristic.
 - 4.4.1. Found by: A
 - 4.4.2. Severity: 2
- 5. Error Prevention (H2-5)
 - 5.1. On the categories page that is accessible from the menu itself, the search icon is confusing. It could imply searching the categories that the user already has or all

possible categories. In my own use of the application, I found myself making that very mistake, and feel that simply having the current space as it is, with just the addition symbol will allow users to browse through their categories as well as add new ones without any confusion.

5.1.1. Found by: A

5.1.2. Severity: 2

6. Flexibility & Efficiency of Use (H2-7)

6.1. There is no need for separate + and search buttons on the screen to add categories. The interface could be simplified and made more efficient by thinning down a list of categories as a user searches.

6.1.1. Found by: A, D

6.1.2. Severity: 2

6.2. The wheel on the home page is an extremely inefficient way to sift through categories. If there are more than about 10 categories, the user is going to get a sore thumb, unless they get tired of spinning the wheel first.

6.2.1. Found by: A, D

6.2.2. Severity: 3

6.3. Sliding through the articles on the bottom of the screen is similarly problematic. It should be possible to show more articles in the same amount of space.

6.3.1. Found by: A, D

6.3.2. Severity: 2

6.4. Right now, adding a new category, is a rather difficult task (it is the complex one for this assignment), but it need not be that way. There seems to be no way of adding a category from the actual place where the categories are posted, that is, the wheel itself.

6.4.1. Found by: A

6.4.2. Severity: 2

6.5. The final issue with the wheel is its distance from the bottom corner, where the user's thumb is located. Given the recent trend is towards larger and larger phones, it made it very difficult for me to easily access the wheel, as it forced me to change the way in which I was interacting with the device itself (I had to change my grip on the phone itself).

6.5.1. Found by: A

6.5.2. Severity: 2

7. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design (H2-8)

7.1. This is the biggest problem in the app for me: there is a lot of duplication of functionality between different screens in this design. Categories, favorites, and history all look similar. The app as a whole feels bloated, with too many similar-looking screens to get at the same information. It seems like there should be a much smaller interface for reading snappy articles on the bus. The app currently has three different screens to choose between categories, history, and favorites, but perhaps one unified screen is enough to sift through all of them.

7.1.1. Found by: D

- 7.1.2. Severity: 3
- 7.2. There is a separate search feature on the main page, to search for different articles, and then separate searches for favorites and categories. One unified search function should be enough to go through everything, including categories, favorites, and history. Duplication of functionality is confusing.
 - 7.2.1. Found by: A, D
 - 7.2.2. Severity: 3
- 7.3. In tasks one and two, when a user lands on an actual article, there is a vertical bar on which there are just two options, save and send. The vertical bar takes up a great deal of real-estate that is extremely valuable, making it more difficult to read the article (as there is less usable space to read it on).
 - 7.3.1. Found by: A
 - 7.3.2. Severity: 1
- 8. Help and Documentation (H2-10)
 - 8.1. I did not see any help or documentation in the app.
 - 8.1.1. Found by: D, A
 - 8.1.2. Severity: 2

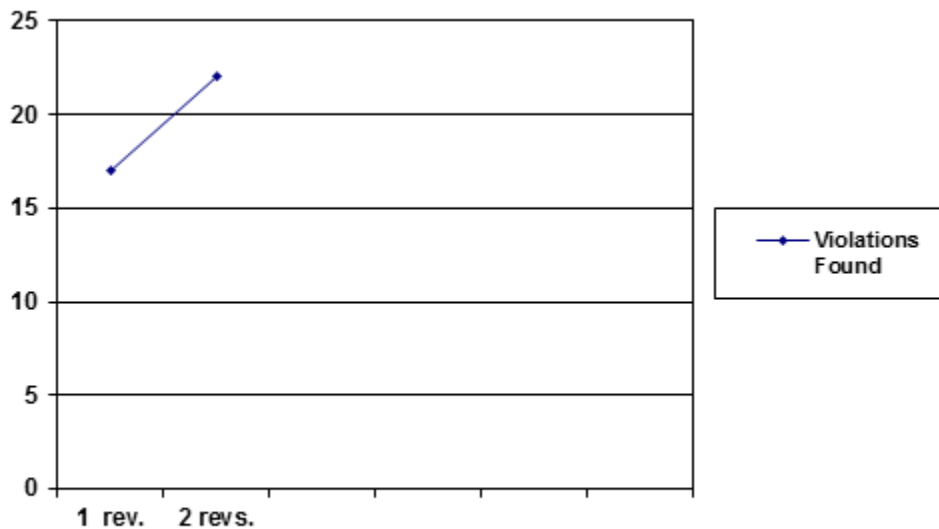
3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
[H2-1: Visibility of Status]	1		3			4
[H2-2: Match Sys & World]		2				2
[H2-3: User Control]			1	1		2
[H2-4: Consistency]		2	1	1		4
[H2-5: Error Prevention]			1			1
[H2-6: Recognition not Recall]						0
[H2-7: Efficiency of Use]			4	1		5
[H2-8: Minimalist Design]		1	0	2		3
[H2-9: Help Users with Errors]						0
[H2-10: Documentation]			1			1
Total Violations by Severity	1	5	11	5		22
Note: check your answer for the green box by making sure the sum of the last column is equal to the sum of the last row (not including the green box)						

4 Evaluation Statistics

severity\evaluator		evaluator A	evaluator D
level 0		0/1	1/1
level 1		4/5	3/5
level 2		9/11	6/11
level 3		4/5	5/5
level 4		0	0
total (levels 3 & 4)		4/5	5/5
total (all levels)		17/22	15/22

evaluator #	# problems found	# problems remaining & problem IDs
A	17	17; unique: [2.1, 4.4, 5.1, 6.4, 6.5, 7.3]
D	15	5; unique: [1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.2, 7.1]



Severity Ratings

- 1 - don't agree that this is a usability problem
- 2 - cosmetic problem
- 3 - minor usability problem
- 4 - major usability problem; important to fix
- 5 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

Heuristics

[H2-1: Visibility of System Status]

- keep users informed about what is going on

[H2-2: Match Between System & Real World]

- speak the users' language
- follow real world conventions

[H2-3: User Control & Freedom]

- "exits" for mistaken choices, undo, redo
- don't force down fixed paths

[H2-4: Consistency & Standards]

[H2-5: Error Prevention]

[H2-6: Recognition Rather Than Recall]

- make objects, actions, options, & directions visible or easily retrievable

[H2-7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use]

- accelerators for experts (e.g., gestures, kb shortcuts)
- allow users to tailor frequent actions (e.g., macros)

[H2-8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design]

- no irrelevant information in dialogues

[H2-9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors]

- error messages in plain language
- precisely indicate the problem
- constructively suggest a solution

[H2-10: Help & Documentation]

- easy to search
- focused on the user's task

CS 147 Autumn 2014: Assignment 13

Instructor: James Landay

- list concrete steps to carry out
- not too large