

## Heuristic Evaluation of *Ballit*

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### 1. Problem/Prototype

🔥 BALLIT 🔥 is a mobile app that helps Gen Z understand policies, their stances on these policies, and make a more informed vote — all in ways that are youthful, fun, and easily digestible.

### 2. Violations Found

#### 1. H10 Help and Documentation      Sev: 3

Icons on the bottom are misleading as to what screens they will bring. The location symbol suggests an interactive map, while the paper symbol does not clearly convey policies. It lacks clear instruction.

Fix: Use small text to display the destination of the buttons or change the icons.

#### 2. H4 Consistency and Standards      Sev: 4

When expressing interest or disinterest in certain policies, the instructions say to swipe if you are interested, but the interface displays 'like' and 'dislike' buttons for the user to click. Users may be confused as to the conflicting instructions.

Fix: Choose one method (either liking or swiping) and stick with it.

#### 3. H3 User Control and Freedom      Sev: 4

If the user makes a mistake in liking or disliking a policy, there is no way for them to return to the screen. While this feature is appealing for Tinder, where excitement is key, it is not desirable when selecting on which topics you want to receive news. No screens have back buttons.

Fix: Add a 'Back' button to every screen.

#### 4. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design      Sev: 2

The water gun emoji trivializes the issue of gun control. It provides a strange aesthetic contrast between fun emojis and the serious picture.

Fix: Pick one aesthetic. The buoyant feel does not meld well with the realistic aesthetic.

#### 5. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design      Sev: 1

The font is uninspired. It does not match well with the overall theme.

Fix: Change the font to be a more modern and fun typeface.

#### 6. H1 Visibility of System Status      Sev: 3

Once you finish the policy selection, it is unclear what happens. Are you returned straight to your home newsfeed? If so, what is the difference in the newsfeed? There is no detail as to what was achieved.

Fix: Label a button 'Submit' that clearly redirects to a changed home screen.

#### 7. H6 Recognition Rather than Recall      Sev: 1

It is not clear how many policies there will be and when the selection process will end. The user needs information on with what they are comparing issues.

Fix: Display all the policies in a ranking fashion, so the user knows all their options and can adjust accordingly.

**8. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use      Sev: 3**

There is no way to change preferences over time without swiping through all of them again. This does not allow for user preferences to change and easily be updated.

Fix: Use the profile page to easily alter preferences.

**9. H1 Visibility of System Status      Sev: 1**

Too much empty space on the screen detailing upcoming elections. The screen is not informative.

Fix: You could get rid of this screen altogether. Would there not only ever be one upcoming election unless you include local and federal?

**10. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use      Sev: 1**

There is no exact date on the specific election, making it hard for the user to accurately gauge how much time they have. This omission could make it difficult to know when to use the app or if they must look elsewhere.

Fix: Election information should show full date of election, not just the month.

**11. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use      Sev: 2**

There is not enough data on the map of polling stations. The user should have access to more stations in case they are not currently at their residence, looking at only the ones around them. There are also no addresses for the polling stations

Fix: Add addresses on click and display all polling stations.

**12. H6 Recognition Rather than Recall      Sev: 3**

Users cannot access their preferred candidates in order to reference what choices they made before. This may confuse the user should they not recall.

Fix: Allow users to access their saved choices in order to create their profile.

**13. H2 Match Between System and Real World      Sev: 2**

There only appears to be room for two candidates in each electoral race, and therefore forces a singular comparison. This element is not representative of many races.

Fix: Display the profiles of all candidates on one page, and allow users to click on each individually for more information.

**14. H1 Visibility of System Status      Sev: 4**

The user cannot see all the information on the candidates, merely if it is a match on certain subjects. I feel like this is a dangerous way to tell voters what candidate they should vote for, using a matching algorithm to influence them. It seems to take a lot of agency away from the voter.

Fix: Let the user access all the candidates' information by clicking on each profile instead of matching them based on their policy preferences.

**15. H8 Minimalist and Aesthetic Design      Sev: 1**

The overall design theme is not super cohesive, combining the fonts, colors, and design schemes. The color scheme is relatively bland for an app targeted at young people.

Fix: Think about font, colors, and designs in order to create a single theme that is recognizable throughout.

**16. H5 Error Prevention Sev: 1**

If zip code and current location do not match, it is unclear what the 1 mile radius applies to on the map of polling stations. This could cause confusion amongst users

Fix: Get rid of current location, so it simply shows the polling stations in the entered zip code.

**17. H2 Match Between Systems and Real World Sev: 2**

When rating agreement with policies, it is unconventional to judge agreement based off of stars. Stars typically imply a rating of how much the user enjoys something.

Fix: Implement a scale from 1-10, and the user can rate their level of agreement on this scale.

**18. H1. Visibility of System Status Sev: 4**

When going through the Choosing Candidates cards, clicking the thumbs up on either gubernatorial candidate brings the user back to the Election options menu. There is no indication of what the clicking thumbs up button did. This is also true for the policy cards.

Fix: A message should pop up, notifying the user of what the clicking the thumbs up button did, whether it saved the candidate or gave more information about the candidate.

**19. H1: Visibility of System Status Sev: 2**

When you're on the screen with the rating of the stars, when the user clicks on a star, they are redirected back to the swiping of policies screen. I think it would be nice for the screen to show the selected amount of stars and then a submit button, rather than click a rating and it's submitted on that touch. This will help give the user a moment to think about how they feel about the policy before they continue.

**20. H8. Aesthetic & Minimalist Design Sev: 1**

On the Find Polling Stations screen, the map is contained in a box in the lower half of the screen. This is too small for the space that is available, so this might be difficult for users to see and interact with.

Fix: Make the map larger, taking up the entirety of the bottom three quarters of the screen.

**21. H3: User Control and Freedom Sev:1**

In task one of the slides, there was an addendum that users can "discover your positionality on them". I think it might be worthwhile on the policies, candidates and propositions, to add an option to expand on a description or outsource to articles with more information. I know that this is not in your current design, but I think it is worthwhile to include a feature that allows the user to get more information about their local government.

### 3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
H1: Visibility of Status		1	1	1	2	5
H2: Match Sys & World			2			2
H3: User Control		1			1	2
H4: Consistency					1	1
H5: Error Prevention		1				1
H6: Recognition not Recall		1		1		2
H7: Efficiency of Use		1	1	1		3
H8: Minimalist Design		3	1			4
H9: Help Users with Errors						0
H10: Documentation				1		1
<b>Total Violations by Severity</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>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)</b>						

## 4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C	Evaluator D	Evaluator E
sev. 0		0	0		
sev. 1	6	3	2		
sev. 2	4	2	2		
sev. 3	4	4	4		
sev. 4	3	4	4		
<b>total (sev. 3 &amp; 4)</b>	7	8	8		
<b>total (all severity levels)</b>	17	13	12		

\*Note that the bottom rows are *not* calculated by adding the numbers above it.

## 5. Summary Recommendations

The main issues with this application were related to visibility of status and user control & freedom. There was a lot of confusion about what particular interactions did, seeing as there were no messages that notified users about what was going on. We were confused when we clicked buttons that brought us to screens we had not expected to see. For example, we thought that the third button on the navigation bar would bring us to the Upcoming Elections screen every time, but we found that this was not true. When we were on the Choose Your Candidates screen, clicking the elections button on the navigation bar did not bring us to the Upcoming Elections screen. Users should be able to press buttons and expect the same functionality that they were shown previously. We also felt limited while using the app, seeing as there were no back buttons, so we felt like we were constrained to the screen we were currently on.

We would also recommend a way to include more detailed information about the topics presented on your app. Giving this option allows users who need more information before making a decision, find more information, but also allow users who don't want information to forgo this and not select a "more information policy". This would increase user agency and prevent uninformed decisions simply based on matching.

Another aspect that led to our confusion was the fact that we would interact with the thumbs up or thumbs down buttons and we had no idea what clicking on these buttons did. This could be made more clear if there were a message that informs the user that their stance on a policy is recorded or that a candidate is added to their ballot. We felt general confusion around the connection between task one and task three — it was not clear to us that the choices I made regarding in policies in task one would affect the information displayed under the candidates in task three. This could be made more clear with the use of status messages or a help button that explains the overall task flow.

We also feel that the design scheme should be more targeted to younger voters. The color, design, and font scheme are not cohesive and are often boring to look at. The mix of fun style (i.e. emojis) and realistic imagery can prove jarring. The name, 'Ballit', combined with the fire emoji is also confusing, and I consistently read it as 'Ball lit,' especially given the fact that

'lit' is in a different color. I would suggest thinking critically about the mix of images, fonts, and color, to focus on a more cohesive and fun theme for the app.

### ***Severity Ratings***

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

## ***Heuristics***

### **H1: Visibility of System Status**

- Keep users informed about what is going on

### **H2: Match Between System & Real World**

- Speak the users' language
- Follow real world conventions

### **H3: User Control & Freedom**

- "Exits" for mistaken choices, undo, redo
- Don't force down fixed paths

### **H4: Consistency & Standards**

### **H5: Error Prevention**

### **H6: Recognition Rather Than Recall**

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

### **H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use**

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

### **H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design**

- No irrelevant information in dialogues

### **H9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors**

- Error messages in plain language
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution

### **H10: Help & Documentation**

- Easy to search
- Focused on the user's task
- List concrete steps to carry out
- Not too large