

Heuristic Evaluation of RHYTHM

1. Problem

Rhythm is an online platform where aspiring musicians meet with other musicians in the area and all over the world to collaborate.

2. Violations Found

1. H2-6 Recognition not recall / Severity 3 / Found by: A, B, C, D

On the message inbox page, I might have tens of people after accepting a lot of them in call page. By then, I might forget what kind of performance Michael showed, and I don't see an option to re-watch what Michael's performance is. To adhere to heuristic, user shouldn't have to memorize that information, but rather be presented with a way to recognize who the person the user is talking to is. You can fix this by attaching the title of piece Michael performed under Michael's name (or whoever the person user is talking to is), or showing the video again if user taps on Michael's profile.

2. H2-8 Aesthetic & minimalist design / Severity 2 / Found by: A, C, D

The sign-up page requests a lot of information from the user, but most of information could be either filled in in the setting part, or the information being asked could be divided into several different screens so that the user wouldn't be overwhelmed by the amount of information they have to write. To adhere to heuristic H2-8, only relevant information should be communicated. I think you can fix this by moving some information that are desired but not required, such as skills, gender, genres, or about me, to the setting page for the user to freely fill in after they successfully sign up for the account itself first.

3. H2-1 Visibility of system status / Severity 3 / Found by: A

On the sign-up page, I think it'd be helpful to indicate which slots are what. The default values you fill in hint at what each slot is about, but after I write after filling in 7 slots, some of which are long lists of skills or a short paragraph self-introduction, I might forget about what a previous slot was about. User should be informed what the user is doing when writing in each slot, to adhere to heuristic. You can easily fix this by writing a short description like "Full Name" or "Password" next to corresponding slots.

4. H2-4 Consistency & standards / Severity 1 / Found by: A

On the sign-up page, some slots like user ID, user name, and gender show default values without explaining what the slot is. On the other hand, slots like Skills, Genres, and About Me show what information user needs to write in the slot, but does not show default values. To adhere to heuristic, each slot should have the same format. You can either put default example value in all slots, or slot explanation in all slots, but should choose one and stick to it.

5. H2-8 Aesthetic & minimalist design / Severity 1 / Found by: A

On the record page after sign-up, there is a red dot on the left top that does not convey a meaningful information to the user. In our short discussion in studio last week, you explained that it does not mean "recording now", which is what users would infer from seeing a red dot on a recording page", but I cannot remember what it is supposed to be. To adhere to heuristic, users shouldn't be presented with information that is not relevant, since they can get confused. I think you can either remove it since I don't think not having a red dot here will detract from my recording experience, or choose a more intuitive way to display whatever information you are presenting with the red dot.

6. H2-9 Help users with errors / Severity 3 / Found by: A, C

On the call page, what happens if a user accidentally accepts or rejects the other user, opposite to what they actually wanted to do (ex: pressing reject button when really liked the other one, or pressing accept when didn't mean to). To adhere to heuristic, I think you should expect users to make mistakes and help them undo their mistakes. You could fix this by showing user's past encounters and manually correct (Check / X) past decisions.

7. H2-3 User control & freedom / Severity 2 / Found by: A

The recording page does not give me an option to mention what the song I'm performing is. However on the call page, I can see the title of songs that the other person is performing in the video. Not sure if you forgot to implement on record page or if it automatically detects, but to adhere to heuristic, user should be given the ability to mention what user's song is if it's going to be displayed on the call page. You can fix this by letting user type the title after recording their video.

8. H2-4 Consistency & standards / Severity 2 / Found by: A

On the discovery settings page, gender is a radio button. However during the sign up, I typed (or at least that's what I think I did based on the design of your prototype) my gender, so it's weird now I get to choose from only three options. To adhere to heuristic, user should be presented with one consistent way of indicating gender. To fix this, just make sign-up page also choose from three, or make discovery settings page type-in gender.

9. H2-2 Match System & World / Severity 1 / Found by: A

On the discovery settings page, user is asked to write an integer indicating how many miles of radius the app should search. However as a user in real world, I rarely think I want to find people in 10 miles radius. I instead think I want to find people inside my town, or district, like "Stanford", or "Palo Alto", or "Bay Area". To adhere to heuristic, user should be presented with language that user speaks, not the system. You can fix this by making user indicate which location user is looking for (like "Stanford"), which I think would be pretty easy since Facebook already tracks location that way.

10. H2-5 Error prevention / Severity 4 / Found by: A, C, D

In this app, user is asked to type talent and genre. However, this will make it hard for users to find each other. If I see myself as a Jazz Vocal, I won't be shown to users looking for Singers, for

example. To adhere to heuristic, app should take preventive measures to prevent users from not being able to find others with skills they're looking for. To fix this, you can simply make a list of talents or genres from which users can select the one closest to theirs. I see something like type the first few characters, and auto-complete working.

11. H2-6 Recognition not recall / Severity 4 / Found by A, C, D

When I accept someone's video (and someone likes mine too), app tells me I'm that person's match and I should send the person a message. However, there's no list of people I'm match with anywhere on the app. There's only a list of messages I've been exchanging. To adhere to heuristic, user shouldn't have to memorize which ones the user is match with, but instead be shown the people with whom the user is matched. You can fix this by either making a page with people the user is matched with, or creating an empty chatroom in inbox page with some helpful text like "Send a message to Michael!".

12. H2-5 Error prevention / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B

When logging in, I'm prompted to upload a video. If I choose to cancel, I'm brought to a blank page which prompts me upload a video before I can use the app. However, there is still a tab bar on the bottom, which makes it seem like the user can still go to other parts of the app. Hide the tab bar when the user hasn't uploaded a video.

13. H2-1 Visibility of system status / Severity 2 / Found by: B

When the app takes you into a messaging thread, the search bar is not clear about what is being searched. Are you searching within messages, or does it switch back to searching between friends? Remove the search bar, or change the text to "Search within Conversation".

14. H2-8 Aesthetic and minimalist design / Severity 1 / Found by: B, C

The overall aesthetic of the app is too bright. The bright purple background made the white text hard to read, and the bright title bars on the distracted from the main video content. Use a maybe a pastel purple.

15. H2-1 Visibility of system status / Severity 1 / Found by: B

Actually trying to view other people's videos does not seem to be clear. Is it autoplay with sound, autoplay without sound, or do I have to tap on the video to trigger a play? I think autoplay with sound would be the best option. This might seem to be annoying, but if people need to collaborate badly enough that they are going to open a specialized app, they are pretty certain. This also decreases the friction of finding people.

16. H2-3 User control and freedom / Severity 3 / Found by: B, D

When recording a video, users might record a video that they don't like. There should be a preview window where the user can choose to edit their video or retake it.

17. H2-3 User control and freedom / Severity 2 / Found by: B

When viewing collaborations, an important aspect is the past work of the individual. Therefore, an option to view past collaborations would be nice.

18. H2-1 Visibility of system status / Severity 2 / Found by: B, C, D

Discovery settings is confusing because it is not clear about whether these are settings for other people to discover you or for you to discover other people. Rename it to “Filter”.

19. H2-7 Flexibility and efficiency of use / Severity 2 / Found by: A, B, D

Having two separate options to view and edit your profile is confusing because you have two redundant views of the same thing. Change it to only “Profile” in settings and have an edit button for the profile. Also combine this with changing a password, as this information is also an important part of the profile.

20. H2-7 Flexibility and efficiency of use / Severity 4 / Found by: B

Since the home is used for finding people, it makes sense to have extra filters for finding people there instead of with general settings. General settings feel like general app settings

21. H2-1 Visibility of system status / Severity 2 / Found by: B

When launching the camera, the app opens a modal and you can't access the tab bar anymore, unlike the other tabs. I think you should keep the modal, since you are basically editing the profile. So maybe you should move the profile into the tab, and then editing the profile is where you add the video.

22. H2-1 Visibility of Status / Severity 3 / Found by: C, D

When clicking “OK” on the interface that tells the user “You’ve been matched with @mwilson! Send him a message!”, a typical user would expect to be redirected to a screen from which he can send a message to @mwilson. However, the interface directs the user to a screen that says “No more musicians found.” This is confusing, and a good fix would be redirecting the user to the message screen.

23. H2-1 Visibility of Status / Severity 3 / Found by: C, D

There is no way for the user of knowing whether she has received a message or not, unless she taps into the ‘messages’ screen. Whenever a user has received a message, there should be a colored dot on the message icon on the bottom navbar.

24. H2-3 User Control & Freedom / Severity 4 / Found by: C

When the user takes her demo video, there isn't a visible way to control whether the camera is in selfie mode or non-selfie mode. There should be a button where that control is possible.

25. H2-5 Error Prevention / Severity 2 / Found by: C

Having only one field for passwords might prompt the users to make typos without realizing. To safeguard against making such error, there should be another field for password checking.

26. H2-7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use / Severity 1 / Found by: C

There are a lot of screens in the prototype, and a lot of clickthroughs. For efficiency of use, it would be advisable to replace screens like “Hi Andrea, to begin using Rhythm...” and “No more musicians found...” as just pop-ups from their previous screens.

27. H2-1 Visibility of Status / Severity 2 / Found by: C

From the very first screen, the log-in button and the sign-up button all lead to the sign-up screen. A fix would be adding a separate screen for log-in only.

28. H2-7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use / Severity 1 / Found by: D

I wish the ‘next’ button was omitted because I feel that reaching your thumb all the way to the top of the screen gets tiring after a while. I wonder if there could be an automatic progression after user interaction. For example, in the record section, pressing ‘Record’ or a prerecorded camera roll video should automatically propel you to the appropriate screen.

29. H2-10: Help & Documentation / Severity 2 / Found by: D

I wish that there was a bit more onboarding to the app. I feel that once I signed in, I’m just in record a video of myself. I am told to showcase my talent, but for what? Also, I’m unsure of why videos of these strangers are suddenly playing after I record a video. Perhaps make it more clear in the beginning the purpose of the actions you are requiring your users to do.

30. H2-8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design / Severity 1 / Found by: D

I wish the screen where you ran through all your matches has a different interface than only an underlined link to your discovery settings. I feel a button would be much more appropriate.

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	4	3		8
H2-2: Match Sys & World		1				1
H2-3: User Control			2	1	1	3
H2-4: Consistency		1	1			2
H2-5: Error Prevention			2		1	3
H2-6: Recognition not Recall				1	1	2
H2-7: Efficiency of Use		2	1		1	4
H2-8: Minimalist Design		3	1			4
H2-9: Help Users with Errors				1		1
H2-10: Documentation			1			1
Total Violations by Severity	0	8	12	6	4	30

4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C	Evaluator D
sev. 0	0%	0%	0%	0%
sev. 1	10%	18%	7%	16%
sev. 2	13%	54%	13%	33%
sev. 3	10%	18%	13%	33%
sev. 4	6%	9%	10%	16%
total (sev. 3 & 4)	17%	33%	23%	20%
total (all severity levels)	40%	37%	43%	40%

5. Summary Recommendations

The three heuristics we found most violated in this prototype are visibility of status, aesthetic and minimalist design, and efficiency of use. A recurring problem we saw was presentation of information that is not relevant to the user, or a task flow that could be made more efficient by reducing steps or options (for example, edit profile and change password could occur in one page). In general, the app can benefit by taking more thoughtful measures to assisting users. If a user has to pause and think somewhere ("Hmm, what was the name of the guy I matched with?"), then the app should present an information at that exact page ("Hey, you should chat with Michael!").

It would also help to provide more context as to where the user is at in the app, whether it's recording, matching, by replacing the top Rhythm logo with more context specific text. I am excited to see where you will take Rhythm! Placing edit with viewing information helps inform the user what exactly they are editing. The wording of several of text items were unclear about what they did exactly. For example, Discovery Settings does not specify whether you are setting the discovery settings for yourself or for what you are looking for. Finally, more work needs to be put into the video creation and viewing flow, as several features are missing, like the ability to preview to your recorded video. A feedback that does not fit neatly into the violations is that the overall design and aesthetics of this app is very old-fashioned. The messaging screens look very modern and aesthetic, but most of the other screens are simply purple background with white text and lines. The app would look much nicer if the rest of the screens followed the messaging parts' aesthetic.

The larger trend that is related to these issues is the fact that there are so many screens and clickthroughs in this app, some of which are unnecessary, and some of needed screens are not incorporated. What is absent is a prioritization of the functions and a neat organization of screens around it. Taking account that organization will improve the user interface greatly.