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Status Quo - 9 am

10/20/16

A3: Heuristic Evaluation

Team

The team we evaluated was from the Exploration section at 3 PM. The members were Jason Markoem, Aaron Yang, and Yahav Erlich. Their web app is an online Travel Planner that allows users to create events, search and add methods of transportation, and customize other features of a standard travel itinerary. It serves as a place where users can go to simplify the planning of trips and vacations.

Heuristics

Prototype 1 = green

Prototype 2 = blue

Comparison = red

Familiar Metaphors

- Prototype 1 used the description of "previous location" to describe the event that the user was planning to be at before the event he was currently entering, but in the context of the menu, this was not entirely clear.

- The prototype utilized an unfamiliar symbol to act as the button to expand a menu. We were not sure as to what the button would do until we pressed it.

- This prototype contained a search bar but it was not clear what part of the website it would search, since there was no clear reason as to why a search bar would be needed. So although the search bar was familiar, it was not appropriate in the context of the website.

- Uncommon button symbols were also used to accomplish tasks that could have been symbolized by more familiar symbols.

- Both prototypes utilized uncommon symbols to symbolize functions that were very common to most computer users. So it was surprising to find out that a weird looking button accomplished a very ordinary task. We give both prototypes a severity rating of 1 with regard to Familiar Metaphors and Language.

Control and Freedom

- After adding an event, there was no option to cancel events / rentals.

- If I wanted to share my trip on facebook, I had to navigate through three pages.

- In order to share a trip through facebook, I had to navigate through two pages.

- Again, prototype did not contain an option to cancel events / rentals.

- Both prototypes did not give the user the freedom to cancel events, so if the user made a mistake on one of the events, it would be stuck in his itinerary. We give both prototypes a severity rating of 1 with regard to Control and Freedom.

Help

- A tutorial on how to navigate the web-page was not provided, so it took longer than needed to learn its features.

- This prototype also did not contain a tutorial on how to navigate the web-page.

- Since both prototypes did not contain a tutorial to use the website, it was more of a hassle to learn all of the features on the homepages. We give this a severity rating of 2 with regard to Help.

Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

- The home page is very clustered and immediately leaves the user confused on where to click first.

- Attempting to scroll down the page was difficult since the page consisted of many individual boxes with their own scrolling feature

- The menu to add events / car rentals / hotels was not laid out in an orderly fashion so it was slightly confusing on what information to enter first

- Home page was slightly simpler than prototype 1 but many options were still presented to the user all at once

- Again, the menu to add events/ car rentals/ hotels was very similar to prototype 1's menu so it remained just as confusing.

- Prototype 1 exhibited a much more chaotic user interface than prototype 2, but both prototypes were still difficult to navigate. It took about a minute and a half to figure out prototype 1 whereas it took almost three minutes to understand how to navigate prototype 1. We give prototype 1 a severity rating of 3 and protype 2 a severity rating of 2 with regards to Aesthetic and Minimalist Design.

Recognition vs Recall

- The icons used to represent the opening of a page were not very intuitive.

- This prototype used the same icons as the first, so again, they were not very intuitive and had to learn what they did by clicking on them., only to realize it wasn't what you wanted to do.

- Since both prototypes used the same symbols, they were very similar in the learning of the functions of the buttons. So, we give them both a severity rating of 1 with regard to Recognition vs Recall.

Show System Status

- The website took note of my budget to display it in the top right corner, but it did not change after adding events that asked for the cost of the event. I was unsure whether the system was broken or if nothing was really supposed to happen

- The same issue occurred in this prototype.

- The only difference between the prototypes with regard to this issue is the font size in which my budget amount was displayed. Prototype 2 had the budget displayed in a much larger font, so it seemed like it was going to be an interactive feature of the website. When nothing happened, it seemed a bit unnecessary. We give them a severity rating of 2 with regard to Show System Status.

<u>Reflections</u>

Two major problems with both of the prototypes were hectic web-page layouts and the lack of a help menu or tutorial. Both of these problems made it difficult to learn how to use the website and to become aware of all of its features. Instead of showing the user all of the features at once, it may help to guide the user through the process of planning his event by creating a "Start Here" option; this may be a solution to the confusing webpage layout and aid the user to begin planning his event sooner. A possible solution to the lack of a help menu would be to create a video tutorial that the user is prompted to watch upon his first visit to the website. The heuristic evaluations really helped with realizing aspects of the website that were not user friendly, such as issues with navigating the page or simply learning of the features that the site has to offer. The heuristics didn't help very much with identifying additional needs of the user that may not be essential to the functioning of the website but will definitely give the user a better experience.

Proposed Changes to our Prototype

- Add a search function to the top bar

  - Heuristic: Flexibility and Efficiency of use

  - User wanted to look for recipes including specific ingredients

- Create a more detailed summary of each recipe posted

  - Heuristic: Aesthetic and minimal design

  - Specific criticisms: video walkthrough could improve clarity of each recipe, picture should be able to be blown up to fill more space and show more detail, comment section should be added to stimulate discussion

- Add simplicity cost rating to the picture

  - Heuristics: Aesthetic and Minimalist design / Familiar metaphors and language

  - Specific criticism: user wanted a way to easily identify the cost range of the food.

- Give the recipes' steps more rigidity and therefore clarity

  - Heuristics: Error Prevention / Help and Documentation

  - Steps to cooking a dish should be clear and straightforward; to accomplish this, the instructions should be broken into short steps with limited characters.

- Add more variation to the flavors associated with each food

  - Heuristic: Control and Freedom

- ○ Users were confused as to why "spiciness" was a rating by which to classify each meal recipe - they believed there should be more flavors associated with each
- Add social aspects, such as sharing and Facebook/Instagram connection
  - ○ Heuristic: Familiar metaphors and language
  - ○ The purpose of the site is to crowdsource recipes, so it would be most effective if users could pull friends in from outside and share their (or others') recipes throughout social media.
  - ○ User profiles receive credit for positive reviews and high numbers of shares or views.
  - ○ Users can "friend" or "follow" each other to increase visibility of respective recipes posted.

Video Walkthrough Link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ujWug5dmig&feature=youtu.be